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THE CHARGE OF HERESY CONTINU'D: IN A Second Defence of the Divine Institution of WATER-BAPTISM, BEING

A full REPLY to a Book of the QUAKERS,
Entituled, *Christian Baptism Vindicated from the Principal Objections of Henry Stebbing, Rector of Rickinghall in Suffolk, in his printed Account of a Conference there, and Published by GEORGE GIBSON.*

Wherein also some Gross and Fundamental Errors of ROBERT BARCLAY, not hitherto Animadverted upon, are Censured and Exposed.

By HENRY STEBBING, M. A. late Fellow
of St. Katherine's Hall in Cambridge.

There are many ungodly and vain talkers and deceivers—whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole Houses, teaching things which they ought not—Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the Faith,
Tit. 1. 10, 11, 13.

Of this sort are they which creep into Houses, and lead captive silly Women laden with sins, led away with divers tickling fables, learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth, men of corrupt minds, probate concerning the Faith. But they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men: 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Alexander the Coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works, 2 Tim. 4. 14.

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S O U L - F R I E N D S H I P

A C T V



A
R E P L Y
TO THE
Quakers Vindication.

§. I.



T length comes out the much expected Answer to my *Quaker-Conference*; in which I find myself deceived in two Things. The first is the Nature of the Performance, which by the Time that

hath been spent about it one would have thought might have been somewhat tolerable. The other, That instead of its coming from *Joseph Middleton*, the Person with whom the Debate was held, it bears the Name of another, who was no otherwise concerned in the main Dispute than as a common Auditor. This part of the *Quakers Management* is really Entertaining. What, is *Joseph Middleton* so very much gall'd, that he cannot yet endure a second touch? Certainly the Friends must be sadly pent, that they are thus forced to call in fresh Supplies upon every Encounter! When the Conference was held, instead of *Thomas*

White, who it was said should undertake me, all on a sudden up starts Middleton. By this time it seems Middleton is pretty well satisfyed; down therefore goes he, and up springs George Gibson. The next bout I suppose our Friend Gibson will think (a) silence on his part to be most proper; and it may (b) remain upon somebody else, to give forth a word of Intelligence. After him, Thomas White's Speech may come to him, and he may (c) find freedom to Dispute. And then by that time Joseph Middleton may have taken Breath enough, and he may give us a broadside before we are aware of it. It is really very tiresome to be thus pester'd with a Set of Men, who either have not Sense enough to know when they are confuted, or not Modesty enough to confess it and be silent. But let them shift and change as often as they please; I fear neither the Number of these Adversaries, nor their Power. There is but one Favour I have to Request of them, which is, that the next Person they pitch upon for their Champion, be one who understands at least common Sense. This one would think they should be willing to gratify me in, because in reality 'tis a favour begg'd in behalf of themselves. How much a good Cause oft-times suffers, thro' the Weakness of those who undertake to defend it, every one knows; and how much theirs, which is of it self so bad, that it needs not to be made worse by an ill Management, has suffer'd by this means, this single Instance may, I hope in time, convince them of. If the Quakers are really perswaded that their Principles are capable of a solid Defence, they have shown themselves either very careless, or very ignorant, in throwing the Burden of it upon such unequal Shoulders. If on the contrary they believe they are not, and had notwithstanding a mind to set a good Face on the matter, they should methinks have been so wise as to have sought out for somebody, who was able to make up by Cunning,

(a) p. 17.

(b) Preface.

(c) p. 17.

what

what is wanting in Strength. But it may be, such a Politick Man as this would have been sensible, that the Deformities of the Cause are too great to be concealed, by any Colours that can be laid upon it; and therefore would have chose, rather than to venture his own Reputation, to leave it to one, who should be well enough qualified to amuse the ignorant; and at the same time, not in a Condition to lose much Credit with the wiser Part of Mankind, by the Meanness of his Performance.

S. 2. After all, there may be more Heads concerned in this Contrivance than we are like ever to know of. Take my word for it, Reader, this *Tool*, as coarse a one as it is, was not fitted up at one *Forge*, nor is it the Work of a single *Artificer*. It bears Date the 27th of the 8th Month, (which is our October) in the Year 1714. and was not published till about July 1715. Do you think now that this Paper has been asleep all this while? Nothing less. I have heard of its travelling thro' my own Parish, and elsewhere, in Manuscript, at least six Months before it appear'd in Print; during which time it might have been *licked over* by several of the most considerable *Quakers* in Great-Britain. Whether George Gibson has made the best Use of his Time, I cannot say; We may however from hence reasonably enough conclude, that since he first *hammer'd* it out, it has had the Advantage of a *Polish*, from the most able of his Neighbouring Friends. So that we are to look upon this as the *Joynt Reply* of the *whole Body*, at least of the Chief of those who were concerned in the Conference; which indeed is one great Motive with me to take it into Consideration. For did I believe that this was altogether the Work of him whose Name it bears, or at least not something which the rest have approved of, and will stand by; I should exceedingly grudge every Moment of Time, that must be spent in the Confutation of it. For what

Advan-

Advantage, or what Credit can it be, (unless in some common Cause) to enter the Lists with a poor Worm, which may be crushed to pieces with the turn of one's Heel, or with the weight of a Finger? But George Gibson has dealt pretty plainly and openly with us in this Matter. (d) Let, says he, some sober and religiously inclined People, should be stumbled, suspecting WE to be somewhat culpable, if WE altogether pass it in silence; it may be expedient to give a word of intelligence, to inform the understandings of those, and check the follies of others. Also to clear our Christian Principles in the sight of Men, as it may please the Lord to enable US, is OUR incumbent duty, being under an apparent obligation upon this publick occasion; the discharge of which is the intent of these following lines. Who are these US and WE the Man talks of? Not surely our Friend George Gibson only. No, far be it from the Saints to speak after so ungodly, and unchristian a manner as to say WE, when they are speaking of a single Person! The plain Truth therefore is, that those who were afraid that People should be stumbled, and therefore thought in their duties upon this publick occasion, to give a word of intelligence, were George Gibson, and the rest of his Brethren the Quakers; who having, as they suppose, discharged the Obligation they lay under by, must also be supposed to have discharged their Heads together for the Production of, these following Lines. And that this is Matter of Fact, I am assured from the Mouth of a very considerable Quaker in these Parts; who told me, that he himself had the Perusal of these Papers, and made such Amendments and Alterations therein, as he thought fit; and also, that the same Liberty had been taken by several others besides. So that the Name G E O R G E G I B S O N, which stands glaring upon the Title-Page, in broad Letters, from an Individual, is now become a Name of Multitude; and till the Quakers will be so kind, as to give

(d) Preface, p. 4.

us a particular Account of the Persons who were concerned in rearing up this mighty Fabrick, the Reader is at Liberty to lay it upon as many Shoulders as he pleases. Only let him take care not to lay too much upon George Gibson; for by all that I could ever perceive or hear of the Man, he seems to be no more qualify'd to manage a Dispute, than he is to whet about the biggest Hammer he has in his Shop with his little Finger. I have seen some Writing, which I do upon very good Grounds believe to be his; and do assure the Reader, that he is not able to Spell true English. But be this as it will; 'Tis sufficient for my Purpose to have shown, that this Book is a Joint-Work of more Quakers than one; and that the Chief at least of those who were present at the late Conference, have approved of, and published it, as their Answer to my printed Account of it. For hereby the Reader will understand, that I am not now giving a Reply to out *Tbetford Smith* only, (which, as I hinted before, is an Undertaking too mean for any one to engage himself in) but to the whole Body of those, with whom I have been concern'd.

§. 3. I must confess, that were I to stick closely to the Conditions I proposed at the Close of my Conference, I might excuse my self this Trouble, even tho' all the Quakers in the Kingdom had publickly own'd the Book, and set their Names to it. For the Arguments therein alledged, are indeed not weighty enough to deserve an Answer; the whole being little else besides Shuffling and Impertinency; which I there declared, I should judge worthy only to be despised. And I was in hopes, that such a Caution as this might have prevail'd upon the Quakers, either to offer something in behalf of themselves, which would carry with it at least the Appearance of good Argument, or else to have held their Tongues. But perhaps they chose rather to write after this silly manner, on purpose that they might have no notice taken of

of them ; well knowing that there are many in the World, and particularly amongst their own Sect, who look upon every thing that goes under the Name of an Answer, to be really such ; and who think that the *Last Blow*, tho' never so inconsiderable, amounts always to an entire and compleat *Victory*. But I am resolved, that for this time they shall reap no Advantage from that Contempt which they might have shelter'd themselves under, had their Manner of treating me been more civil, and their Principles less dangerous. And I am so much the less inclin'd to favour them in this Point, because I have now a very fair Opportunity given me, of explaining more fully some Things, which have hitherto been only just touched upon ; and thereby of clearing my Principles, from some Aspersions which these Men have cast upon them, and which may be of some Weight with those who are not used to consider.

In his Preface, George Gibson says, (e) that I have greatly trespassed upon the Catecism of the Church of England. Elsewhere ; (f) That I have argued contrary to those Doctrines that I am obliged to teach and instruct others in. In short, he gives me very roundly to understand, (g) That I am so far strayed from the Flocks of the Reformed Churches, as openly to show my self in the Midnight of Popish Apostacy. This, you'll say, is home enough. And yet he thinks all this to be so very plain, (h) that some of my Superior Brethren may see it their Places, to take an Opportunity to advertise and instruct me better in that Doctrine or Art, which I have much too soon profess'd my self a Master of. Not more too soon, perhaps, than George Gibson has undertaken to write Vindications. But George Gibson is to be inform'd, that the Art, in which my Degree in the University gives me the Title of Master, is not that Art wherein he now says I want to be better instructed, i.e. Divinity ; but some other Art which he knows nothing

(e) P. 5.

(f) P. 32.

(g) P. 29.

(h) Pref. p. 6.

of : This he might have been told ; but then a smart turn of Raillery had been lost, and so 'tis e'en as well as 'tis. Well, we will excuse an illiterate Mechanic in such a Mistake as this ; and consider the Reason why he thinks I am so much in want of better Instruction ; and this it seems is, because (as he supposes) I have (i) argued for the Use of Water exclusive of the Spirit, and absolutely restricted the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to one Generation only. Now if I have done thus much, I shall then grant that I do indeed want to be better instructed ; and though I am perswaded that every understanding Person who has read my Conference, or even this Answer, must needs see without any further Notice, that this is only a blunder of George Gibson and his Friends ; or else what is worse, a most malicious Calumny ; yet, as I hinted before, those who are not accustomed to consider seriously of what they read, may perhaps want some Assistance in order to make them duly sensible of it. 'Tis for such that these Papers are chiefly intended ; and I hope to make it plain, even to the most ordinary Capacities, that what I have taught concerning Water-Baptism is exactly agreeable to the Doctrine of the Church of England, and withal to convince them how little regard is due to what these Men have here offered, in order to expose and run down that sacred Institution of our blessed Saviour.

§. 4. I thought it necessary to premise thus much by way of Apology for this Reply. I come now to the Book it self ; Concerning which I cannot but make one general Remark, viz. That the Quakers have not dared to charge me with any foul dealing in representing the Conference, as it stood between Joseph Middleton and me. And therefore I hope the Reader will take this Silence as a full Acknowledgment of my Impartiality ; since 'tis by no means likely that

(i) p. 36.

if I had either concealed any thing that was said, or set down any thing which was not said, their Zeal for their Cause would have suffered them to have passed it over. George Gibson says indeed, that (k) *I have given an imperfect Account in my Book, of some Discourse, which I had with HIM at the Conference, in not publishing it with the rest, as was expected by Persons of divers Persuasions.* If there were any such Persons as these, they were very unreasonable. For what had I to do to take notice of what George Gibson said, in the Report of a Conference held with Joseph Middleton? He was the Man that was fixed upon by the Friends to answer my Objections; and accordingly he was the only Man whose Answers were taken down in Writing. Methinks then it was enough of all Conscience to acquaint the World fairly and truly what these Answers were, without troubling either it or my self, with a Rehearsal of the Impertinencies of every one that thought fit to interpose. Had any thing been offer'd more solid by George Gibson, or any other, than what was offer'd by Joseph Middleton, in Answer to any of my Arguments, I should not have failed to have inserted it with the Rest, tho' even this I should not have been obliged to by the Rules of the Dispute. But that nothing of this kind was offer'd, I appeal to any one who will but be at the trouble of reading George Gibson's own Account, in which he will not find any thing of moment urged, which was not offer'd by Joseph Middleton, and set down accordingly. But that which renders this Complaint without excuse, is, that there was scarce any thing said by George Gibson, that had any Relation to the Matter in Debate, which I have not published with the rest. The Reader may convince himself of this, by comparing my Conference from p. 43. to the end, with George Gibson's Reply from p. 10. to p. 15. Ay, but I did not set down *all*. That is, I did not set down a

(k) p. 7.

great deal that was nothing to the purpose. For Instance ; I did not set down what passed between George Gibson and me concerning Perfection. I did not let Folks know how that George Gibson looked upon me and my Friends, and thought it strange that we should all be so forgetful of good old Simeon. I did not take notice of that notable Conclusion of his, viz. That upon our Principles, all who are baptized with Water, are therefore saved. Nor of his clever way of accounting for St. Peter's commanding the Gentiles to be baptized with Water, by alledging, *a State of Infancy in the Apostle's Understanding.* These things I say, which make up the main of that defect which George Gibson hath supplied, I did not set down ; and it would have been very wonderful if I had ; for as to several of them, I do not remember that George Gibson ever said them. They might be said, so far as I know ; but if they were, George Gibson instead of finding fault, ought to have thanked me for forbearing to take notice of such Assertions, as must effectually expose him to the Contempt and Ridicule of any Man that has but a common share of Understanding.

§. 5. But I perceive the Man is resolved to let Folks know, that he is able to speak, tho' it be never so much to his own discredit ; and therefore since he has gratifyed himself so far, I will gratify him a little farther, and he shall have no occasion hereafter to complain that I have not taken sufficient Notice of him. And because he makes such a stir in his Book about *Perfection*, tho' it be somewhat out of the way ; I will here briefly consider what he has said upon that Point. That we had some Discourse upon that Subject, after the Conference with Joseph Middleton was ended, I do very well remember ; but as to the Particulars of it, they are now slipt out of my Mind. However, I am willing to take George Gibson's Account of this Matter, so far as it relates to what was said by Him. By Him, I say ; for as to that which he

pretends to have been said by me, a great part of it is a mere Figment of his own Brain. (1) Henry Stebbing, says he, objected, saying, That Perfection was not attainable; but that there was such a common Gift of the Spirit as you (the Quakers) hold forth, whereby People might keep out of the gross Enormities of the World, and walk indifferently in all Civil Causes, but not to a sinless Perfection. Did I say all this, George? Then where was thy Honesty, when thou wouldest endeavour to make the World believe, that I restrict the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to one Generation only? Do ye restrict the cleansing Gift of the Holy Spirit to one Generation only? You would think your selves very ill used if we should say so. If therefore it be true what thou say'st, that I did grant that there was such a common Gift of the Spirit as you hold forth, then 'tis plain that I do not restrict the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to one Generation only. But I need not go this way to work to clear my self from that Charge, because I have another way of doing it, as I shall shew by and by. And therefore, George, 'tis false to say that I did grant that there is such a common Gift of the Spirit, as you hold forth. For all the World knows that that which you hold forth as the common Gift of the Spirit is Inward, Immediate Revelation; and you must needs be sensible, that such a common Gift of the Spirit as this, was never at any time granted by me. But it seems I did further assert, that by this common Gift of the Spirit Men might keep out of the gross Enormities of the World, and walk indifferently in all Civil Causes, but not to a sinless Perfection. This Man, I perceive, has such a stock of Nonsense, that he can pleasure other Folks with some upon occasion. What dost thou mean, Friend, by walking indifferently in all Civil Causes? Who but a Quaker could ever utter such unintelligible Far-gone as this? The Reader may believe I said these words, if he thinks that I do not understand common

Sense; but if he thinks otherwise, he must suppose that what I said was to this purpose, viz. That by the Assurances of God's Spirit Men might keep from all wilful and deliberate sins; but that still there would be some Frailties and Imperfections behind, which they could not wholly rid themselves of. These are my Thoughts of the matter, and this, or something to the same Effect, I suppose I might say. Well, and what says George Gibson to all this? Why thus it seems he answer'd, (m) *What Notions dost thou come up withal? How many Perfections dost thou make? It is either Perfection or not Perfection; yet there are degrees.* Of which Argument George Gibson must make Sense, before he can expect that I should give a Reply.

§. 6. By this Instance the Reader may take notice that he is not to trust George Gibson, when he undertakes to represent matters as spoken by me. He has served me thus more than once, as every impartial Judge will easily perceive. To add one Instance more to the former. At p. 14. having informed us that at parting (after the Conference was ended) he desired us not to go away and boast, for that we had not proved one Tittle of the Charge of Heresy against them; he sets down these words as my Answer, *I thought I had sufficiently: Pray God open your Eyes to see it, that it may hereafter reflect upon you.* Special Nonsense again, as was ever penn'd! But I hope the Reader will have so much Charity for me, as to think that these and the like Passages, which favour so rank of the Quaker-Idiom, were the Quakers words and not mine. But he proceeds, (n) Henry Stebbing Query'd, *Can you live without Sin?* I Answered, *Better than with it: I know not that Sin is assisting unto Life, but rather to Death, for the Wages of Sin is Death.* That is to say, if George Gibson were a little better, he would be never the worse. This was wisely spoken! But, *Friend,* dost thou de-

(m) Ibid.

(n) Ibid.

sign here only to entertain us with a *Fest*? If thou dost, it may do well enough, only the Misfortune is, 'tis a little too *Stale*. But if thou art in earnest, (and who would think that so grave a Saint as *George Gibson* should be so vain as to break a joke in so serious a matter as this) thou art then a great way besides the Question. For we are not enquiring whether *it would be better* if a Man could live without Sin ; nor yet whether supposing a Man to have once attained to Perfection, he would thereby be in danger of falling immediately into a fit of Sickness which may cost him his Life ; for in these Points I suppose we are all agreed. But the Question is, whether *it be possible* that Man, so long as he is in this Life, *can* be wholly without Sin ? Now if thou thinkest it a good Argument to prove that *it is possible*, to say that he can live *without Sin*, *better* than he can *with* it, then by the same way of arguing I will undertake to prove, that a *Fool* is capable of understanding *Divinity*, an *Ass* *Mathematicks*, or that *George Gibson*, if he pleases, may be a *Prophet*. For the Foundation of this Argument is, that 'tis always possible to attain that for which when attained one may be *the better*. Now if this be true, a *Fool* I say may understand *Divinity*; because it would be better for him if he did : An *Ass* may also be well skilled in the Art, v. q. of *Measuring*; for it would be better for him if he were; and so on. In short, *George*, if this Rule be true, thou mayst be *Prophet*, *Alderman*, *Lord Mayor*, or what thou wilt. What say'st? Would it not be better for thee if thou wer't Master of an Estate of Five or Six Hundred Pounds a Year? I will answer for thee it would. Cheer up then and be brisk : Throw away thy *Bout-bammers*, and speak for a *Conveniency* and Six; thou needst not want such an Estate, if thou canst but believe thine own self; nay, if that will not do, thou mayst the same way argue thy self into a possibility of being Master of both the *Indies*. Wherefore, *Friend*, out of pure Love and Friendship to thee and thy Family,

mily, I do return thee this Argument just as I had it. Be wise, and make the best on't ; for I do assure thee, that if thou can'st but make it to hold, thou may'st have, do, and prove, whatsoever thou hast a mind to.

§. 7. But now comes a Clincher ! (o) If it be your Principle, that Perfection is not attainable in this Life, the more unworthy Men you are, for imposing it upon the People ; bringing them under a solemn Promise and Vow, which is as a Curse if it be not kept ; viz. That they shall forsake the Devil and all his Works ; — keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of their Life. Whereupon George Gibson cries out with great Astonishment, Is not this Perfection, if it be kept so ? Can any of you deny it ? Yes, George, I can, and do deny it. We do not enjoin Men to do more than they can ; nor does God require it ; nor can any Man promise it. He that keeps from all wilful and deliberate Sins, does forsake the Devil and all his Works : Nor will it hinder, if he has some Fraulties which he cannot conquer. For such Fraulties as these are not the Works of the Devil, but the Imperfections of our Natures. On the other Hand, he keeps God's holy Will and Commandments, who performs all that God commands him to do : But to be absolutely free from all manner of Failings, God does not command ; On the contrary, such Depravities as are not wilful and deliberate, he will dispense with thro' the Merits of Christ ; and therefore to keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, does not imply a sinless Perfection. This, I think, is a plain and satisfactory Answer to George Gibson's Query. Whether I said thus much at the Conference, I cannot now tell. George Gibson would make his Readers believe, that I and my Friends were sadly put to it, to answer this thund'ring Objection ; for, it seems, we were observ'd to look much

(o) P. 13.

upon

upon one another, and seem'd willing to end the Discourse with this Compliment, saying, You and I shall not differ much about that. 'Tis one of George Gibson's usual Compliments, to represent Matters unfairly. 'Tis possible that I and my Friends might look much upon one another ; and if we did, I hope we might do it without Offence, or without being supposed to have nothing to say. There were, I remember, many Occasions given us, which made us look very much one upon another ; viz. those impertinent Replies, which George Gibson and his Friends oft-times gave to my Objections ; and their pertinacious insisting upon mere Trifles, for want of better Things. If the Reader should suppose this latter to have been the Case; he may probably be in the right ; and then he will see Reason sufficient, why I should be willing to put an end to the Discourse. For what was all this to the Business of Water-Baptism ? Or who, that had been harass'd by these Men for four Hours before, would not be willing to put an end to such Discourses, as had no manner of Relation to the Point that had been debated ? George Gibson, therefore, thinks too highly of himself, if he supposes that I designed it as a Compliment to him, i. e. (as I suppose he means) as an Approbation of what he had said, when I told him, that *he and I should not differ much about that.* No, George ; If I did say these Words, (and something like them I remember I did say) it was only to let thee know, that we were disputing upon something which was foreign to the Business in Hand, and about which I did believe there would be no great Occasion of Difference between us, provided we could once agree about greater Matters. George Gibson is pleased to say, that I was the Man who first started this Discourse. But those who were then present know very well, that it was not my way, but the Quakers, to run from the Question into other Matters ; and therefore 'tis most likely, that they were the Persons who first brought in this Discourse.

But

But whether it were so or not, I cannot certainly say. If it was I that first began the Dispute, I suppose it was upon some just Occasion that the Quakers had given me.

§. 8. At length George Gibson appeals to Experience; and here indeed the Conclusion would be good, if the Premises could be made out to his Mind. (p) Our Presence (says he) is not groundless; for they that are considerate may observe a remarkable Change upon some of our Friends, since they believed, and received the baptizing Spirit of Trust. And to the same Purpose, in another place: (q) Several of our Friends came through that Dispensation (i. e. the Dispensation of Water-Baptism) divers ways, and could find no Salvation, till they came to that of the Holy Ghost; and then, O then, was such a Reformation, as doubtless some of you must needs be sensible of. Why so strait-handed, George? Why must all the Religion and Morality in the Kingdom be confin'd to thy Sect only? I hope it may be said without Vanity, that in Point of Morals, some of our Profession are every whit as good as any of thine. And as to Sound Principles, I am of opinion, that we are all of us a great deal better. That there is a remarkable Change in those who are brought over from the Church of England to your Persuasion, is true enough; and I do think, a Man needs not to be very considerate, to take notice of it. But what is this Change? Why I will tell thee, George. From a Profession of the Doctrines of Christianity, as they are taught in Scripture, they run into extravagant Whimsies of modern Invention. From a Belief of the Necessity of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's-Supper, they are brought to a Neglect and Contempt of both those Sacred Institutions. From following a Lawful, Sober, Learned, and Judicious Ministry, they beap up to themselves Teachers,

(p) P. 13.

(q) P. 11.

who have no other Call to that Sacred Office, than their own *Enthusiasm*, and are as blind and ignorant as themselves. From a Decent and Regular Way of *Divine Worship*, they run into *Slovenliness* and *Confusion*. And from a Free, Courteous, and Open Way of Conversation, they grow into a Superstitious Affection of Clownishness and Singularity, in their *Garb*, *Language*, and *Deportment*. This, *George*, is the *Change*, which we do readily allow those of your Sect to be very *remarkable* for. And who would not be proud of so blessed a *Reformation* as this ! But then as to Sobriety, Honesty, and all the other Branches of Morality ; I cannot for my Part see, that the *Quakers* are one jot superior in these Respects to the rest of their Neighbours. Believe me, *Friend*, I have seen as much Knavery and Lewdness under a *Broad-brim'd Hat*, as ever thou didst under a *Long Periwig* : And if any of our Profession be not so good as they should be, the Fault is not in our *Principles*, (which, whatever thou may'st think, do show them a far more sure and safe Way to *Salvation*, than yours) but in *themselves*, who will not live up to what our *Principles* teach them. But to forbear any further Comparisons. Let the *Quakers* be as much better than the rest of Mankind, as they would pretend themselves to be. Have any of them arriv'd to *Perfection*? This is what *George Gibson* would insinuate, tho' I perceive he dar'd not plainly and openly to assert it. *Our Pretence* (that *Perfection* is attainable) is not groundless. But why ? Why, because those that are considerate may observe a remarkable *Change*, &c. How cold is this ! Speak out, *Man*. Tell me, by *Yea* and by *Nay*, are any of thy Friends without Failings ? *Da exemplum* ; Show me the *Man*, and I have done. But this, *George*, thou wer't, I suppose, very sensible that thou could'st not do ; and therefore thou hast thought fit to handle this Point very cautiously and tenderly : As a certain Animal mumbles *Thistles* ; for fear, I suppose, lest you should be stung.

stung. No, no ; of all People in the World, never instance in your selves for Perfection ; You, that are guilty of such manifest Breaches of our Saviour's Commands, in your Neglect and Contempt of his Positive Institutions. And as to thine own self, George, thou hast in this single Performance of thine, discover'd so much of *Human Frailty*, to say no more of it, that thou hast only reproach'd thy self, in pleading for a Possibility of being exempted from it. If Perfection be, as thou say'st, a Thing attainable in this Life ; what a shame is it, that thou, who makest such large Pretensions to Godliness, should'st fall so vastly short of it ! —— But 'tis time that we conclude upon this Point. And therefore, to sum up all in a few Words : Perfection from all *Wilful* and *Deliberate Offences*, is attainable. But as for Sins of *Infirmity*, they seem inseparable from us in this World. By Care and Diligence we may reduce them ; but utterly to extirpate them, is not in our Power. The best of Men ever did, and do, feel and lament them. For, to use the Words of an Excellent Author ; (r) What *Understanding* is there, which is not liable to Error ? What *Will*, that does not feel something of Impotence, something of Irregularity ? What *Affections* that are mere human, are ever constant, ever raised ? Where is the *Faith* that has no Scruple, no Diffidence ; the *Love* that has no Defect, no Remission ; the *Hope*, that has no Fear in it ? What is the State that is not liable to Ignorance, Inadvertency, Surprize, Infirmitiy ? Where is the *Obedience*, that has no Reluctancy, no Remissness, no Deviation ? This is a Truth which, whether Men will or no, they cannot chuse but feel. The Confession of the Holiest Men bear witness of it. And indeed, I wonder that the *Quakers* should so stiffly contend for the Possibility of such a Perfection as this, when they themselves, in this very Book, have

(r) *Lucas's Relig. Perfect.* §. 2. c. 5.

deny'd it in express Terms. (s) We do not, says George Gibson, place Perfection in Man as he is Man, but in Christ. Which Words, as he is Man, can in this place signify just nothing at all. For if Perfection be not in Man, but in Christ; 'tis plain, that Man, consider him either *barely as Man*, or otherwise, cannot be perfect. But he adds: *As far as Man is in Christ, is he not perfect?* What Stuff is this! What dost thou mean by *Man's being in Christ*? I have no other Notion of any one's *being in Christ*, than his *believing in Christ, and obeying Christ.* Now, if this be what thou meanest, (and what else thou canst mean, to make Sense of it, I cannot imagine) then thy Question amounts to no more than this; viz. Whether, *so far as a Man believes in Christ, and obeys Christ, he is not so far Perfect?* I answer, that he is: But the Question is not, Whether a Man may be perfect *in some degree, or rather in some sense*; i.e. so far as to believe in, and obey Christ; but, Whether he can be *absolutely perfect*; i.e. free from *Moral Defects or Imperfections*? This, I say, is the Question; and the Affirmative is what thou oughtest to have proved. How far thou hast fall'n short of it, I leave any one to judge. And so much for the Business of Perfection.

§. 9. I should now proceed directly to the main Subject of the present Dispute between the *Quakers* and me, viz. Water-Baptism. But I must beg my Reader's Patience, whilst I take notice of one Thing; and that is, the unjustifiable and unchristian Attempts of George Gibson, and his Brethren, to render me odious, and thereby to prejudice his Readers as much as possible against my Performance. In his Preface, he says, That my Book, *if strictly consider'd may, to a Person of solid Judgment, answer it self; it containing so many foul Slanders, and gross Absurdities,*

(s) P. 13.

one shall seldom meet with in so small a Volume. Now one would reasonably expect, that a Person who has taken upon him to rebuke another in so homely a manner as this is, should, of all Things, take care not to be guilty of the same Fault himself. But so it has happen'd, that our Friend has taken himself by the Nose, in both these Respects. As to *Absurdities*, his Book is every where most plentifully fraught with them, as will be shewn afterwards. But this I believe the poor Man could not help; and therefore he is the more excusable. But certainly, tho' he was not able to show himself wise, he might at least have shown himself honest. Whether he has done this or not, I shall leave the Reader to judge for himself, after I have presented him with a Taste of those base and uncharitable Reflections, which he has been pleased to bestow upon me.

§. 10. At p. 14, 15. he would very fain persuade his Readers, that the sole Motive of my engaging in this Controversy, was some private Grudge which I have taken up against the Quakers. To countenance which Insinuation, he was forc'd to forge as arrant a Falshood as could well be invented; viz. That I have, somewhere or other in my Book, express'd an extraordinary Aversion to T H E M, and their Principles, aboue all other Sects. The Place in my Book which he refers to, must be in the Preface, p. 5, 6. or no where; and there indeed I have express'd an extraordinary Aversion to the Principles of the Quakers. But that I have such an Aversion to their Persons, I did never say, nor have I given just Occasion for any one to suspect it of me. Yes, says George Gibson, I have specify'd this very largely, in those vulgar, rigid, and morose Terms which I have used. This again comes with a very good Grace from his Mouth, who has every where treated me with the most rude, insolent, and unbecoming Language. The first Title he salutes me with, is, the
(t) wa-

(t) watty Priest ; afterwards I am the (u) wandering Priest ; then I am (x) a man of singular presumption ; (y) a Shepherd that hath little good Pasture for his Sheep ; (z) Blind Guide ; (a) The Spirit of Antichrist ; (b) Cain's Spirit, and the like. If any thing can be more vulgar than this, I am mistaken. And what now are those vulgar, rigid, and morose terms which I have used, and by which I have so largely specified my Aversion to the Quakers ? Why, these ; I have charged them with (c) Heresy ; I have said that they are Seducers, False Teachers, Deceivers, a Poysonous Sect, Obstinate, Perverse, &c. These terms I must confess are vulgar (i.e. common) enough, but how I could have avoided the use of them, unless I had coined new ones, I do not understand. I do not know of any word so proper to call Heresy by as Heresy ; nor False Teachers, as False Teachers ; neither can I tell how I could so significantly have expressed the mischievous and destructive Nature of the Principles of the Quakers, than by calling the Quakers a Poysonous Sect. If the Quakers are not pleased with such Appellations as these, they must take care not to deserve them ; which if they once do, I do assure them they shall have no more of them from me : But till they do this, I shall venture their further Displeasure, being very sensible that such Expressions cannot, by Men of Judgment, be thought to argue any other Aversion, than an Aversion to their Principles, which I think can never be too much detested and abhor'd. Do the Quakers think that the proper way of showing ones Charity, is to sooth and flatter People in their Errors ; or that a Minister of Christ is to sit still and see his Flock devoured, lest forsooth he should seem to be rigid and morose, if he should represent their Danger to them under such Colours as it deserves ? If they do, let them hear St. Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Preach the

(t) p. 1. (u) p. 29. (x) p. 21. (y) p. 16.
 (z) p. 24. (a) p. 34. (b) p. 35. (c) p. 19.

word; be instant, in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering. The same Apostle writing to Titus concerning the Deceivers of those Times, bids him Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the Faith, Tit. 1. 12. And who indeed can think himself not concerned to discharge this Duty which the Apostle has enjoined, who considers those dreadful words, Ezek. 3. 17. *When I say unto the wicked thou shall surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hands.* Wherefore, Friend, that Insinuation of thine, by which thou wouldest make People believe, that the Ground of my opposing you and your Brethren, was some private Resentment against your Persons upon the account of your bearing (d) Testimony, as you are pleased to express your self, against the Antichristian Yoke of Tythes, is as malicious, as 'tis silly and ridiculous. No, George; we have other methods of doing our selves Right in that case; and if we had not, I declare it, I should chuse rather to be a Sufferer by your Fraud and Injustice, than to endeavour to remedy my self by disputing you into good Sense; a Drudgery so intolerable, that nothing but a Sense of my Duty, a Concern for your Souls, and the Souls of those committed to my Care, could have prevailed upon me to have engaged my self in. This I have before declared to have been the sole Motive with me to enter upon this Debate; and I have given so little Reason for any Man to suspect the contrary, that herein I thought I might safely appeal even to the Quakers themselves. But for thy sake, George, I shall take care for the future not to trust a Quaker in such a case again.

§. 11. But I perceive George Gibson is resolved, whatever comes on't, that I shall not have the Credit so

(d) p. 15.

much

much as of a good Intention in any thing that I have done in this matter; and therefore he takes hold of the least handle to suggest a want of Charity and Tenderness in me. For thus he proceeds, *What tenderness (e) doth the manner of his Proceedings shew?* Who after he was told that the House was licensed, and doubtless knew that we were a Christian People tolerated by Law, besides a Divine Gift of the Ministry, which is a Commission of it self, as in Joel 2. 28. I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, &c. Yet notwithstanding, as his own account shews, he — went in and found one Thomas White, — with several of his Friends in the Parlour, and demanded of him by what Authority he came there to teach his People in the manner he did. Ay, have a care of you indeed! 'Tis pity you should be hurt! But pray, good Sir, tell me how it was possible for me to proceed more tenderly than I did, unless I had been so tender of you as not to proceed at all? This I know you would have been glad of, and is what it seems you think I ought to have done. But why? Why, because forsooth, I knew you to be a Christian People tolerated by Law. 'Tis true, I did know you to be a People tolerated by Law; but I did not know, nor do I yet know, that such a Toleration gives any one Authority to preach. The Law indeed does permit, i. e. exempt from Punishment, every Hair-brain'd Fellow, who shall think fit to Usurp the Sacred Office of the Priesthood; but such Usurers are Usurers for all that; and it is therefore the Duty of every Lawful Minister of Christ to confront and oppose them. O, but the Quakers have a Divine Gift of the Ministry, which is a Commission of it self. Right, George, provided thou canst make it out that thou, and the rest of thy preaching Friends have such a Divine Gift. But I tell thee that ye have no such Gift, and do put it upon thee to prove that ye have, if thou canst tell how. Malice it self could not have invented any thing worse than what follows.

(f) I can hardly think, says he, that Henry Stebbing hath given the very bottom of his own Judgment on us, in these Black Characters; nor know not where he can have past perhaps near thirty Years in this Nation, without having an opportunity of better Knowledge of us; I rather take it to be a DESIGNED ODIOUS to affrighten his poor Prisoners. This is really astonishing! The Black Characters he talks of are no more than what you have heard of before, viz. That the Quakers are Hereticks, Deceivers, False Teachers, &c. Now because George Gibson is resolved to make me as bad as ever he dares for his Life, he supposes that my giving these Black Characters is all Design; that is, in short, that I am in my Heart as stanch a Quaker as even George Gibson himself, only I have not Honesty enough to own it! Here now is a most noble Instance of Quaker-Charity for you! Does it not well become this Man to cry out against foul Slanders, who has dared in so publick a manner to charge me with the most foul Prevarication, for which I am sure he has not the least Shadow of Proof? Where didst thou learn, George, that I have not given the Bottom of my own Judgment in these Black Characters? Have I given thee any just occasion to suspect that I am so desperately wicked, in contradiction to my own Judgment and Conscience, to charge any Man, or number of Men, with so grievous a Crime as that of Heresy? Thou know'st that I have given thee none. And why then — But why should I wonder? He has cast the same uncharitable Reflection upon the whole Body of the Clergy in general. (g) Hearing, says he, that the Priest had given out that he would be there (at the Meeting) to dispute, I took little notice of that, considering that by this time most of his Function might have known better than to contend AGAINST TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. Pray observe this! The Man thinks (and I charitably hope he does from his Heart believe it,) —

(f) p. 17.

(g) p. 1.

that to oppose the *Quakers*, is to oppose *Truth* and *Righteousness*. Then he takes it for granted that we do all of us believe so too ; and considering this, he thinks that most of our Function might know better, than to go about to contend with them ! That is to say in plain English, those of our Function are a parcel of *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* ; they are in their Consciences convinced that the *Quakers* are in the right ; and that their contending with the *Quakers* proceeds from a Spirit of Opposition to *Truth* and *Righteousness* ! I suppose my Brethren of the Clergy will be as little concerned to wipe off this Aspersion as I am : And I do assure them that I am as easy about the matter as possible. For notwithstanding *George Gibson* seems now to be so fully satisfyed that I am of his side, and that my charging him and his Brethren with *Heresy*, was only a Copy of my Countenance ; yet before he takes his leave of me he falls into another Mood, and says, that I am in the (b) midnight of *Papish Apostacy*, and have only (i) disguised my self as a Minister of the Protestant Church of England for a Benefit. Now what pity is it that one of so fruitful an Invention as this, should want Judgment and Contrivance to lay his Stories a little closer together ! How is it possible, *George*, that I should not be in good earnest when I charged thy Sect with *Heresy*, if it be true what thou say'st, viz. that I am a *Roman Catholick* in Disguise ! Do the *Roman Catholicks* approve of your Doctrines, or you of theirs ? Are *Papery* and *Quakerism* so nearly related the one to the other, that the same Person at the same time may be *Papist* and *Quaker* too ? If they be, pray be so free as to tell us so, and then we shall see instantly on which side the Cheat lies ; but if not, call me *Quaker*, or call me *Papist*, which you please, but for Mercy sake, and for thine own Credit's sake let me not be made both. It had been enough, one would have thought, to

(b) p. 29.

(i) p. 36.

have

have satisfy'd a reasonable Malice, to tell the World that I am a *Quaker* in Disguise; for I do assure you, I think 'tis hardly possible to say any thing of me that is worse.—But this Man deals in Scandal by Wholesale, and never knows, I perceive, when to have done. His Rage has so transported him, that he picks up all the Dirt he can lay his Hands upon, and never considers before he throws it, whether it will light upon himself, or upon me. Now when a Man is once come to this pass, he may e'en rail on for any heed that is to be given to what he says. We ought indeed to pity such an one, as we do *Madmen*; but his *Poyson* carries its own *Antidote* along with it, and can never hurt.

§. 12. I must not pass over that cleanly wipe which he gives me at p. 15. because it will now come in so handsomely, *viz.* That I am one of those who, as the Proverb says, *bad need of a good Memory*. This Proverb every one knows is applied to *Lyars*; and how much Truth there is in it, may be seen by the Instances just now rehearsed. So that if there be but as much Justice in the Application of it on my side, George Gibson and I may both sit down together, and bewail our great want of what the Proverb says we have so much need of. But I will leave it to any impartial Man to determine between us, whether I wanted a Memory, or George Gibson wants Sense or Honesty. For the Ground of this scurvy Reflection is no more than this, *viz.* That I have declared in my late Conference, that the Publication of it was entirely owing to the Quakers, and that I was willing that the Noise of the Debate should reach as little beyond the Bounds of my own Parish as possible. It is true I did say so; and I think I have given very plain Demonstrations of my Sincerity. For I would fain know, what any Man could have done to render the Conference private that I did not do? Did I not desire that it might be held in a private Room, in the Presence of a few? Did I not

earnestly invite Joseph Middleton, and such a select Number as he should chuse, to come up to my House. Did he not refuse to grant me that Request? Nay, what is more, did he not tell me that he cared not how many were present, and refuse to go into a private Room at Jonathan Symonds's, notwithstanding he had before agreed that the Conference should be so managed? George Gibson dares not to deny one titte of this. And yet notwithstanding all these Endeavours on my part, to have the Conference private; and the Endeavours of the Quakers on the other hand to render it as publick as possible, I must be called Liar; i. e. I must be so, because George Gibson and his Friends are resolved to say any thing of me that may blacken my Character, and render me as odious as they would have me to be. Ay, but (i) how doth this agree with p. 50. where I say, that I readily believe that the Quakers had rather that the Writing part had been let alone? And also with his hasty printing, and its being published in the News for several Weeks together? Why since I perceive thou must have every thing hammer'd into thy Head, I will tell thee. These two things are just as consistent with each other, as the Quakers ill Management is with the Weakness of their Performances. That the Quakers had rather that the Writing part had been let alone, is a plain case, and it seems you durst not deny it: But the Publication of the Conference, after it was taken down in Writing, might be owing to the Quakers for all that. That is, the Quakers might give me a just occasion to make that Publick, which I, and even they themselves, had rather should have been concealed. And so in fact they did, viz. By their boasting so confidently that I had not made good my Charge of Heresy; when at the same time they had not answered so much as one Argument of all those that had been urged against them. Could the Quakers have said

(i) p. 15.

fy'd themselves with less Noise and popular Osten-
tation, they might have triumph'd unmolest'd for
all me. But when they became so much bloated
with their supposed Success, that there was no con-
taining themselves within moderate Bounds, but
they must be bursting forth upon every Occasion,
and letting Folks know what mighty Men they were;
I think it highly concern'd me, in the most speedy
and publick manner I could, to acquaint the World
how little Occasion there was for all this Swelling.
But there is a good Reason to be given, why this
Quaker, and the rest of his Brethren, should be so
very angry at me for my (x) hasty Printing, and for
the Advertizing the Account of the Conference in
the Publick News, several Weeks together, into most Parts
of the Nation: They would have been glad, I sup-
pose, to have enjoy'd the Glory of their pretended
Conquest a little longer; and how forward soever
they were to publish their Feats in this obscure Con-
ner, were not very desirous that their wiser Friends
abroad should be acquainted, how weakly their
Champion (*Joseph Middleton*) had defended that
Cause, which he had with so much Forwardness un-
dertaken to maintain.

§. 13. Having given my Reader this Taste of George Gibson's way of treating me; I may, I think, have Leave to reply to him in the Words of our Sa-
viour, Mat. 7. 3, 4, 5. *And why beholdest thou the Mote*
that is in thy Brother's Eye; but considerest not the Beam
that is in thine own Eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy Bro-
ther, let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye; and behold
a Beam is in thine own Eye? Thou Hypocrite! first cast
out the Beam out of thine own Eye; and then shalt thou see
clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye. But
this would be making him too large a Concession; for it would imply, that I have been guilty of the

same Fault towards him, tho' in a lesser degree; which is not true. No, nothing of this kind; not *him* *not*, not one Tittle of *Slander* will the Reader find in my Book. He may perhaps be surpriz'd at this, considering that George Gibson has charged me so home with it, telling me (as has been before observed) that it contains so many foul *Slanders*, as one shall seldom meet with in so small a Volume. But will he not be as much surprised, if I should tell him, that notwithstanding all this Outcry, George Gibson has not charged me with any one particular Instance of *Slander*? And yet this is the very Case! See, and examine if you please; you will find what I say to be true. He has indeed, as I said before, complain'd of me, for saying that the *Quakers* are *Hereticks*, *Seducers*, *False Teachers*, &c. This he did not care to hear of; and therefore (a) requested modestly, that I would sojourn *my Terms*. That is, I suppose, he would have had me, when I came to oppose them, have said against my own Conscience, that they are no *Hereticks*; that they seduced no body; that they taught no false Doctrine. This, you'll say, was a modest Request. However, this is all I can find charged upon me throughout his whole Book, that has the least Appearance of *Slander*; and therefore, this (I suppose) must be what he means, when he talks of *foul Slanders*. But pri'thee, George; is saying that a Man is a *Heretick*, or a *False Teacher*, always a *Slander*? If it be, what a *Slanderer* art thou, who hast (b) returned the Charge of *Heresy* upon me, as belonging to my self? To ease thee therefore of this, *Friend*, I must tell thee, That it is not barely the telling a Man that he is a *Heretick*, that makes the *Slander*; but the saying this of him, whilst either he really is not so, or whilst the Person who accuses him, does not know and believe him to be such. Now, whether you and your Brethren be *False and Heretical Teachers*, is the Que-

(a) P. 8.

(b) P. 21.

stion between us, and what (I think) I have prov'd upon you; wherefore, till you can answer my Arguments, and show that you are not, you must not call me *Slanderer*, for saying that you are. If it be a *Slander* to accuse any Person of that whereof he is really guilty, what foul *Slanderers* were the Apostles; who, as you may find in Scripture, never spared to bestow upon the *Heresicks* of those Times such Names as they deserved? There we have *Seducers*, *Deceivers*, *False Brethren*, *False Apostles*, *Deceitful Workers*, *Grievous Wolves*, and abundance of such Appellations. Now I suppose, had our modest Friend Gibson lived in those Days, and had (as undoubt-edly he would) some such Words as these fall'n to his Share, for his Contempt of our Blessed Saviour's Institutions; this, with him, would have been *vulgar*, *rigid*, and *morose Language*; and the Apostles would have been often call'd upon to *soften* *their Terms*. Wherefore, George, thou art as much mis-taken in thy Computation of *Foul Slanders*, as (what we shall see presently) thou hast been of *Gross Absurdities*. Thy Book, which is not much above Half the Volume of mine, out-does me! Out-does me, did I say? Nay, rather our Performances in this respect, bear so little Resemblance the one to the other, that 'tis doing my self wrong, to allow there is room so much as for a Comparison.

§. 14. And now, is not this a most notorious Instance of base and unchristian Dealing; for a Man, in the very Beginning of his Book, to raise in his Reader a mighty Expectation of *foul Slanders*, when he has not so much as one single Instance of Slander to lay to his Adversary's Charge! Suppose that any one (and doubtless there are Numbers of that Sort) who never saw my Book, should take up George Gibson's, and throw it by without troubling himself any further than to read his *Preface*; he must, if he be inclin'd to believe what George Gibson has said, conclude

clude me to be one of the greatest Villains upon the Face of the Earth. For as to the Charge of *Heresy*, no Man will be apt to think that a Slander, because it is the main Foundation of the Dispute between the *Quakers* and us; and what, as I said before, the *Quakers* must clear themselves from, before it can deserve that Name: At least, no Man can suppose, that this is all *George Gibson* aims at, when he talks of so many foul Slanders as one shall seldom meet with in so small a Volume. What then must such a Man think? Why, it may be, that I have charged the *Quakers* with some Principles that they do not hold. That I have painted them out as *George Gibson* has done me, under the blackest Colours that Fancy could invent: In short, he is at Liberty to think me as bad as *Malia* and *Scandal* can possibly make me. And yet now, here is not one Syllable of this true, even my Enemy himself being Judge! Nothing of this kind has he charged me withal, but that I have accused the *Quakers* of *Heresy*; that I have call'd them *Seducers*, *False Teachers*; and (what by sad Experience I have found to be true) that there is an obstinate and perverse Spirit amongst them, which does render them deaf to Instructions, and averse to the Use of such Means, as by God's Blessing would recover them from their Errors! Where then, *George*, is thy Honesty and fair Dealing? Thou a *Christian*! Thou a Saint! Thou Inspired! For shame; never dare to blaspheme the Blessed Spirit of God, by pretending to be under his immediate Conduct and Influence. Never more boast of Perfection! Never more, till thou hast repented, and art become better, lay Claim to that Meekness, Gentleness, and Charity, which are the Badge of every true Disciple: Thou, who hast used a *Christian* in so vile a manner, as even a *Jew* or a *Heathen* might be ashamed of; and for no other Reason, than because he has told thee the Truth, and endeavour'd to Reform thee!

S. 15. What
else

§. 15. What has been said, may (I hope) be sufficient, not only to clear my self from the Imputation of *Slander*, but moreover to convince those, who are apt to be carry'd away with that outward Show of Sanctity, for which the *Quakers* are so remarkable, that they are not altogether the Men they would be thought to be. Nothing can be more apparent, than that in order to the more easy Answering my *Conference*, one great Design of George Gibson and his Accomplices, has been to prepossess their Readers with an ill Opinion of its *Author*; a Practice, which even when there is Room for it, is mean and disingenuous; and when there is none, of all other Things the most directly opposite to the true Spirit of Christianity. One ought not indeed to charge a whole Body of Men, with such Faults as do belong only to a few of them; and therefore I had not made this Observation, had I not known it to be the General Practice of the Party. Scarce any one has publickly opposed the *Quakers*, but he has met with the same Usage from them that I have; and that for the very same Reason, viz. Because those who have opposed them, have set forth their false and scandalous Principles, under such Terms as they deserve. This now, with them, passes for nothing else but *Calumny* and *Slander*; and then do they fall foul upon their Adversaries, in the most *virulent* and *abusive* Language that Tongue is well able to express. I might produce Instances enough of this kind; but every one, who is acquainted with their Writings, must be sensible that what I say is true. Now, for such Men as these to put on *grave*, and *demure Looks*; to set up for *Saints*, and to insult over the rest of Mankind, with a *Stand off*, for I am bolier than thou; is such a gross Piece of Hypocrify, that methinks there needs no more than a common Degree of Apprehension, to make a Man sensible of it. Had these Men that hard Usage from their Opposers,

which they always complain of ; even this would not justify such Treatment. They may depend upon it, *Truth* stands in no need of *Calumny*, for its Support : It wants nothing but its own Lustre, to make it visible : and when that prevails, all false Colours will immediately vanish before it. Besides, Christianity forbids us to *render evil for evil*, and *railing for railing* ; and tells us, that the Servant of the Lord must be gentle unto all men, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. How well George Gibson and his Friends do answer to this Character, I leave any reasonable Man to judge, who considers what little Cause I have given for those scandalous Reflections he has cast upon me. They seem as yet to be wanting in one very necessary Lesson, far inferior to this, and that is, *Not to reward Evil for Good, nor Hatred for Love.* But till they have learnt this, and that other too, as others ought from hence to be caution'd, not to think too highly of them, so it may become them to be a little more Modest in their Sentiments concerning themselves. Of all Things, I must beseech them, not to arrogate to themselves the Gift of *Divine Inspiration* ; such Inspiration I mean, as was given to the *Prophets* and *Apostles* of old ; which blasphemous Pretence of theirs, is so effectually exposed by this Instance of their Behaviour, (as indeed it commonly is by all the rest) that one would not desire any thing more convincing. You preach and write by the *Holy Ghost*, who make no Conscience of endeavouring to blast the Reputation of others, by the most scandalous Falshoods ! Can the Spirit of *Truth* revile, and tell *Lies* ! Look thro' the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and see if you can find any such Stuff, as you (amongst you) have raked together within the Compass of a few Pages. You will there discern a warm and generous Zeal for God's Glory ; an ardent Love to the Souls of Men ; a noble Boldness in maintaining Truth ; a Spirit of Meekness towards those who are out of the way, and

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a decent and becoming Sharpness, if they deserve it. But you will find no Scandal, no Rudeness, no Venom, no Insolence : No, George ; The Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness ; and whatsoever is contrary to these, proceeds not from that Spirit, but from another, whose Inspirations (I suppose) no Man will be forward to boast of. St. Jude tells us, that Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation ; but said, The Lord rebuke thee, Ver. 9. If the Devil deserved such Treatment as this, surely I might deserve as good ; unless it be true, that I am worse than the Devil : And so indeed, if it were possible, any one would think me to be, if that Description be true, which George Gibson has given of me. But I despise the Slander, and forgive the Slanderer. And tho' George Gibson thinks himself so good, as to (c) have no need of my Prayers ; I will venture his Displeasure once more, and earnestly pray that he may hereafter be forgiven.

C. 16. The Reader, I fear, will think I have detained him too long upon this Head ; but besides, that such scandalous Methods to support a Cause, may to some prove a more convincing Argument of its Weakness, than the best Demonstrations ; and that such unchristian Treatment ought not to be pass'd over unrebuked : Besides all this, I say, it may be of Service to the Quakers, to see their secret Malice brought to the Light ; forasmuch as they may hereby be admonished for the future, (I will not say, to be more reserv'd and cautious in their Conduct ; but, what will be infinitely better) to attempt a brough and radical Cure of these Evils, by correcting those inward Depravities of Mind, from whence they come. If what I have said should have this Effect upon any of them, it would be a most pleasing

(c) P. 14.

Thing to all true Lovers of Virtue : And as to my own Part, notwithstanding *George Gibson*, out of his abundant Charity and Goodness to me, has thought fit to say, that he (*d*) thinks I rejoice to see, that there are some amongst the Quakers, who are as blamable in their Lives as any of our Persuasion ; I do declare sincerely from my Soul, that I should (on the other Hand) rejoice to see them all as good as they ought, and as they pretend themselves to be. I delight to see no Man a Shame and a Scandal to his Profession, be it what it will ; But could wish with all my Heart, as well for our Sakes as their own, that all Men would strictly and conscientiously follow that, which, by their Principles, they believe themselves bound to. I am sure, were all our Sectaries thus disposed, we should find it a more easy Matter to convince them of their Errors, than we do at present : For *Heresy* and *Schism* seldom take any deep and lasting Root, in those who are influenced by a true Christian Spirit, and are possess'd of all those good and virtuous Dispositions which the Gospel teaches. —— But 'tis not the way to merit my Reader's Pardon, for presuming thus far upon his Patience, to trespass upon it yet further by Apologies.

§. 17. To come now therefore to the main Subject of the present Controversy, from whence we have all this while been digressing. The Reader is to observe, that instead of tracing me step by step, and giving a distinct Answer to those several Arguments which I have urg'd in favour of *Water-Baptism* (which had been the most proper and natural way of proceeding) *George Gibson* has, after his own Fashion, summ'd up my *Affertions under Four General Heads*; (*c*) not intending, as he says, to follow me in all my twisting Quibbles. These twisting Quibbles (as he calls them) are my *Syllogisms*, some of which he had been repeat-

(d) P. 13.

(c) P. 20.

ing just before ; and there may be very good Reasons assigned why these were not to be meddled with, viz. 1st, Good Heads it may be were scarce, and so they did not understand how to go about it. Or, 2^{dly}, if they had followed me in these twisting Quibbles, they might have found themselves so hamper'd, that they would not have been able easily to untwist themselves again. Something of this sort must have been the matter, or else I dare say the Friends would not have been so very shy of following me. But let the Reason of this be what it will ; the matter of Fact is confessed ; and what George Gibson intended, he has most punctually perform'd. For of all those Arguments which stand in Form in my Conference, he has not so much as attempted to show any one to be defective, either in the Premises or the Conclusion. In short, all that he has done towards answering my Arguments for Water-Baptism, has been to muster up a few silly ones of his own and Barclay's together against it ; notwithstanding which, he pretends that his Design was (f) to give some further Reply to the Arguments of the Watry Priest, as he calls me ; and accordingly has given his Book the Title of *Christian Baptism Vindicated from the principal Objections of, &c.* Whereas there is not one Objection from which he has endeavoured to vindicate what he calls *Christian Baptism* ; and therefore had his Design been answerable to what he has really perform'd, he should have said, that it was to cast a mist before the Eyes of the Ignorant, and endeavour to stifle the Evidence of those Arguments, to which he was not able, nor would so much as pretend to give a distinct and satisfactory Reply. But I will be more civil to George Gibson, than he has been to me ; and his Arguments, such as they are, shall be fairly examined : Tho', since he has not thought fit to follow me in my twisting Quibbles, I shall not think my self obliged to follow him in that

(f) Pref.

confused

confused Method wherein he has placed them, but in such Order as I judge to be most convenient; and that is this.

First, I shall consider what George Gibson has offered, to prove that Water-Baptism is not the Christian Baptism, or That Baptism which Christ has enjoined to all Men as a Condition of Salvation.

Secondly, I will examine what he has said to shew, That the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a Perpetual Baptism.

Thirdly, I will prove that the Doctrine of Water-Baptism, as explain'd by me, is exactly agreeable to what the Church of England teaches concerning it.

Under these Three general Heads I shall take in every thing that he has said, as well against the Doctrine of Water-Baptism it self, as against my way of defending it: And convince him, if he is to be convinced, of the greatness of his Error in the one case, and of his foul Dealings in the other.

§. 18. I. I will consider what George Gibson hath said to prove that Water-Baptism is not the Christian Baptism. And here we will begin with that Text of St. Mark, Chap. 16. Ver. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* This the Reader may remember, was the first Text alledged by me at the Conference to show, that Water-Baptism is the Christian Baptism. The way by which I proved that it must be understood of Water-Baptism, was, by showing that it cannot possibly be interpreted of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. How well George Gibson has answered this Argument, will appear by and by under our Second Head. In the mean time it seems that he was then so quick-sighted, as to (f) see instantly that this Text was on their side, as much as any they could

b (f) p. 8.

have chosen for themselves; which taken all together may be true enough, because I am persuaded that there is not one single Text, throughout the New Testament, that is on their side. We will however see, how he has now gone to work, to show that this Text is on their side.

His first Argument is this; That the Baptism here spoken of as that which Saves, cannot be Water-Baptism, (g) unless it could be proved, that all who are baptized with Water are therefore saved. Which Argument stands upon this Foundation, viz. That the Baptism here spoken of is such a Baptism, as that whoever is baptized with it, will therefore be saved, i. e. such a Baptism as is singly, or of it self, sufficient to Salvation. Whereas on the contrary it is most evident, that the Baptism here spoken of, is not such a Baptism as is singly or of it self sufficient to Salvation. For to believe is a different thing from being baptized, and 'tis expressly asserted in the Text, that we must believe and be baptized too, before we can be saved. Had therefore George Gibson a mind to have talked Sense, he should have said thus: That since our Saviour has here promised Salvation to all those who Believe and are Baptized; therefore the Baptism here spoken of must be such a Baptism, as if joined with a sincere Belief, will be sufficient to Salvation; and then if he could have proved Water-Baptism not to be such a Baptism as this, his Conclusion would have been good. But I suppose George Gibson, saw that this was impossible to be made out, and therefore thought fit to go another way to work.

To make this matter plain to the most ordinary Capacity; Water-Baptism is an Ordinance appointed by Christ, as that whereby we are to be admitted as Members of his Church, and consequently is one Condition of our Salvation. But besides this, Christ has enjoined us another Condition to be performed,

(g) p. 10, II.

and that is, *that we do believe*, i. e. not only give our Assent to the Truth of such things as he has revealed to us, but to show forth the Fruits of such a Faith in our Lives and Conversations. Now you know, that where a Promise is made upon *two Conditions*, both those Conditions must be performed before the Promise can take Effect. Wherefore since *one Condition* of Salvation is, *that we Believe*; and another, *that we be Baptized*: 'Tis plain that as *our being Baptized* will not entitle us to Salvation without *believing*, so neither will *our Believing* without *being Baptized*. This I think is all very intelligible; and therefore this little may be sufficient to show George Gibson, that our supposing *Water-Baptism* to be here spoken of, does by no means lay us under a necessity of Affirming, that all who are Baptized with Water are *therefore saved*. The Matter indeed is so very plain of it self, that I had not said even this little, but in condescension to the Weakness of those with whom I have to do; and that I might show the Vanity of an Objection which is very common in the Mouths of our Ignorant *Quakers*. *Water-Baptism*, say they, *the Christian Baptism!* *Why, dost think that sprinkling a little Water upon Peoples Faces will bring them to Heaven!* Truly I think not. But I think that sprinkling Water upon Peoples Faces will bring them to Heaven, if they afterwards lead such Lives as Christians ought to lead. And I think on the other hand, that no Man has a right to Heaven by vertue of Christ's Promise, who is not Baptized. But what, must all the *Quakers* then be Damned! I do not say they must all be damned; I know not how it may please God to dispose of them hereafter. He may (and I hope will) save those of them who do not wilfully and obstinately refuse to comply with his Institutions, by an *unconvenanted Mercy*: But I say they have no Title to Salvation, *by the Conditions of the New Covenant*, because they do not perform those Conditions; and let

George

George Gibson, or any of his wiser Friends prove the contrary if they can.

C. 19. His Second Argument, if you will be so civil as to call it so, by which he would prove that this Text cannot be understood of Water-Baptism, stands thus. (b) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, &c. Now observe (and 'tis worth any ones observing) is this Baptism with Water, or with the Spirit? To prevent mistakes, our Lord's following Words are to be considered, And these Signs shall follow them that believe; In my Name they shall cast out Devils; they shall speak with New Tongues; they shall take up Serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Now until Henry Stebbing can prove that Water-Baptism is saving, and followed with these Signs, either literally or mystically, the same Text which he brings for his Proof, stands against him, confutes his Argument, and confirms our believing it was and is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which saveth, and is Christ's Baptism. So then! The wonderful Birth is come forth at last, and 'tis indeed a very Monster! It seems, because all those who are Baptized with Water cannot cast out Devils, speak with new Tongues, take up Serpents, drink Poyson, &c. therefore Water-Baptism is not the Christian Baptism! But prithee, George, is it necessary that the Christian Baptism should always be followed by such Signs as these? If it be, then I grant that my Arguments for Water-Baptism will hereby effectually be Confuted. But how doth this confirm the Truth of thy Opinion, viz. That Baptism with the Spirit is the Christian Baptism? I doubt not but thee and thy Friends pretend to be baptized with the Spirit. But can't thou, or any of thy Friends, cast out Devils, speak with new Tongues, take up Serpents, or Drink Poyson? I dare say

(b) p. 23.

there are none of you that will venture upon the Experiment. And therefore as far as I can see, George Gibson and I are both in the Ditch ; we have been disputing so long about the Christian Baptism till we have both lost it. O, but George has a *Salvo* for that ! These things, it seems, are to be done either *literally* or *mystically* ! But how *mystically* ? To *cast out Devils*, to *speak with new Tongues*, &c. are said to be *Signs* ! Signs, Man, not whether a Person be truly Baptized or not, but Signs of the Truth, and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion ! These were *Miracles* that were to be wrought by some of the first Believers, for the Confirmation of the Doctrine which they were to Preach. Now 'tis the first time that ever I heard of *mystical Signs*, or *mystical Miracles*, in my whole Life. In short, *Friend*, thou art not a *mystical* but a *literal Juggler* ; and therefore to avoid *mistakes*, and that we may know what thou wouldest be at ; be so kind, the next time thou findest *a motion* to write, to let us know what these *mystical Signs* are. For instance ; what 'tis to cast out Devils *mystically* ; to speak with new Tongues *mystically* ; to take up Serpents *mystically* ; to drink Poyson *mystically* ; to heal the Sick *mystically*, by laying on of Hands *mystically*. And when thou hast told us plainly what all these things are, and made it out as plainly that thou and thy *Friends* can do them, I doubt not but we may make as just Pretensions to them as any *Quaker* of you all.

C. 20. I do not find that George Gibson hath said any thing further upon this Text. I proceed therefore to another Argument, whereby he has endeavoured to prove, that *Water-Baptism* is not the Christian Baptism ; which, if it be possible, is worse than any of the former. (i) If, says he, *Water-Baptism* be saving, and the only means of incorporating into the Body or Church of Christ, how did it happen that as in Mat. 3. 5. Jeru-

(i) p. 21.

salem and all Judea, and all the Region round about Jordan were baptized of John in Jordan, and also those that his Disciples Baptized, both while they were with him, and after they came to Jesus; and yet it appears by Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews, that most of them perished by a sore Destruction, and so few gathered into true Church-fellowship; as that it is said, Acts i. 15. that the number of the Names were an hundred and twenty; and the Scriptures nowhere say that Water-Baptism saved one Soul of these, or any after them. This Argument one may almost swear is of the Smith's own furbishing as well as forging! But where to find either Head or Tail in it, I do not well know. If any thing be meant by it, it must be this, viz. That because most of those who were baptized by John Baptist, and by his and our Saviour's Disciples, were destroyed with a sore Destruction, therefore Water-Baptism is not the Christian Baptism, or the Baptism which Saves. Now to take no notice of several egregious Blunders which George Gibson is here guilty of, and especially in point of History and Chronology, it might be sufficient to observe, that if this Argument proves any thing, it proves something that the Quakers will not be willing to grant, viz. That the Baptism with the Spirit is not the Christian Baptism, or the Baptism which Saves; since it is evident, that many of those who certainly were baptized with the Spirit, even the Apostles themselves did likewise perish by a sore Destruction. But art thou, George, so void of Understanding, as to think that no Baptism can be a saving Christian Baptism, unless it be a fence against a Musket-shot, or a Canon-Ball? Good now, rally thy Senses a little, or I shall think that thou art fitter to dispute in Bedlam than any where else. I always thought that the true End of Baptism was to save Mens Souls; and if Water-Baptism be a Means proper and necessary to this End, let those who are baptized with it, be drowned in a Ditch, crush'd in pieces by the fall of a House, perish by the Sword,

or by any other sore Destruction you'll please to fancy, Water-Baptism will be a saving Baptism for all that. But it seems the Scriptures no where say that Water-Baptism saved one Soul of these, or any after them. By which if thou meanest that Water-Baptism alone never saved one Soul; it is true, and no one I believe ever denied it: But if thy meaning be, that the Scriptures no where say that Water-Baptism ever saved one Soul in concurrence with other means, or that Water-Baptism does conduce to Salvation as a necessary Condition of it, tis a most notorious Falshood, as I have already shewn from *Mark 16. 16.* and is further evident from the express Words of the Apostle, *Tit. 3. 5.* *He hath saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And *1 Pet. 3. 21.* *Even Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God.*

§. 21. But because the *Quakers*, and amongst the rest our Friend *George Gibson*, do contend that these two Texts are not to be understood of Water-Baptism, I shall in this place briefly consider them. As to the first, the Apostle has declared that we are saved by two things, *viz.* *1st*, The Washing of Regeneration; and *2dly*, the Renewing of the Holy Ghost. Now I would desire to be informed of these Men, what the Apostle means by *The Renewing of the Holy Ghost?* 'Tis plain (at least they will grant) that by it is meant that inward Influence or Operation of the Holy Ghost by which we are renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, i.e. by which we are Sanctified and raised up unto newness of Life. Now in the Opinion of the *Quakers*, those Persons who are thus renewed by the inward Operations of the Holy Ghost, are baptized with the Holy Ghost. Wherefore they must grant, according to their Principles, that the Apostle in these Words hath declared, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is one thing by which we are saved, or one means of Salvation. Well; But what is that

that other thing by which also the Apostle here says we are saved, viz. *The washing of Regeneration?* 'Tis plain it must be some *Baptism*. But the *Baptism* with the Holy Ghost it cannot be, even allowing the *Quakers* Notion of that *Baptism* to be the true; because the *washing of Regeneration* is distinguished from that which the *Quakers* pretend is the *Baptism* with the Holy Ghost, viz. *The renewing of the Holy Ghost.* 'Tis evident therefore, even according to the Principles of the *Quakers* themselves, That *the washing of Regeneration* must signify the *Washing*, or *Baptism* with *Water*; and consequently, that the Apostle does affirm in these Words, that *Water-Baptism*, and *the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, are those two things by which we are saved; exactly answerable to that Saying of our Saviour, *John 3. 5. Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

§. 22. As to that other Text of St. Peter, you need only to consider the foregoing Words, to know to what sort of *Baptism* it belongs. For the Apostle at the 20th Verse had been speaking of *Noah's Ark*, wherein, says he, *a few, that is eight Souls, were saved by Water*, or rather * *through* the Water, or *out of* the Water, for it was not the Water but the *Ark* that was the *Instrument* of Saving. After which he immediately subjoins, *The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth now save us;* where the Greek Phrase which we translate *the like Figure whereunto*, ought (says *Barclay*, and very rightly) to be rendred † *the Antitype whereof*, which may signify *contrary* as well as *like* or *parallel* *whereunto*. Take it in this Sense, and the Text will be as full for *Water-Baptism* as possible. For then the meaning of the Apostle must be this, That whereas in the Days of *Noah Men were destroyed by Water*,

* Διῆστρο.

† ἐπί (or, as some Copies have it, ἐπί) ἀντίτυπον. See Dr. Hamond.

on the contrary, now under the Gospel Men are saved by Baptism, i. e. by Water, for else the Antithesis will not hold. However this be, 'tis exceeding plain that the Apostle has in these Words made some sort of comparison between the Christian Baptism and Noah's Flood. But if the Christian Baptism be not Water-Baptism, what ground can there be for the Comparison? He might have said the like Figure whereunto, even Faith, or even Godliness, doth now save us, as well as even Baptism, if in Baptism there be no use of that from whence he took occasion to speak of Baptism, i. e. Water. But, says Barclay, (k) the Apostle in this place doth seem especially to guard against those who (induced by this Comparison) might esteem Water-Baptism the true Baptism of Christ. For he tells us, 1st, Negatively, what it is not, viz. not a putting away the filth of the Flesh. 2dly, He tells us affirmatively what it is, viz. The Answer of a good Conscience towards God. With him agree George Gibson and his Friends, p. 12. where these very Words of Barclay are quoted. But how dogmatically do these Men assert that which ought to have been proved. I deny that the Apostle has affirmed either that Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh, or that it is the Answer of a good Conscience towards God. For let his Words be considered. He first of all affirms of Baptism that it saves. The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth now save us. Then it follows, not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience. Which Words ought in all reasonable Construction to be (at least they very well may be) referred to the Verb saves, or doth save, immediately preceding, rather than to the Substantive Baptism, which is more remote. If so, then that which the Apostle says, is not, that the putting away of the filth of the Flesh is not Baptism; nor yet that the Answer of a good Conscience is; but that the putting away

(k) Apol. Prop. 10. §. 4.

of the Filth of the Flesh does not save, and that the Answer of a good Conscience does. Thus, I say, the Words may be interpreted; nay, they must be thus interpreted, because otherwise the Apostle must have asserted a downright Falshood; the answer of a good Conscience being no true Definition of Baptism, either according to the Quaker Notion, or ours. That it is no true Definition, according to our Notion, which makes Baptism *with Water* to be the Christian Baptism, the Quakers do earnestly contend, and is indeed very evident. And that it is no true Definition, according to their Notion, which makes the Baptism *with the Holy Ghost* to be the Christian Baptism, may easily be proved. But there is no need to do this, because the Quakers themselves have confess'd it, by supposing the Answer of a good Conscience not to be the Christian Baptism it self, but the Effect or Consequent of it. (1) Now, says George Gibson, is this (i. e. this Answer of a good Conscience) EFFECTED, but by the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, and by that only? To the same Purpose, Barclay, in the Place above quoted: Now this Answer cannot be, but where the Spirit of God bath purify'd the Soul, and the Fire of his Judgment bath burnt up the unrighteous Nature; and those in whom this Work is wrought, may truly be said to be baptized with the Baptism of Christ; i. e. of the Spirit, and of Fire. Where you see, that he makes the Purifying of the Soul, and the Burning up of the unrighteous Nature, (as he is pleased to express himself) to be the Baptism of the Spirit; and the Answer of a good Conscience to be the Effect, or Consequent of this Baptism: For he says, that this Answer cannot be, but where the other is: Which implies, that the Baptism of the Spirit is the Cause, and only Cause of it. Now, since according to the Quakers own Concessions, the Answer of a good Conscience is not

(1) P. 12.

Baptism it self, but the Effect of it ; it must be false to say, that Baptism is the Answer of a good Conscience ; because *Baptism*, and the Effect of Baptism, are distinct Things, and cannot therefore be defin'd the one by the other. It is evident then, that what the Apostle has affirm'd of the Answer of a good Conscience, must be what has been before said ; viz. That it saves ; by consequence, what he has affirm'd of the putting away of the filth of the flesh, must be, that it does not save : For the Connexion does plainly shew, that the very same Thing which is affirmed of the one, is denied of the other.

§. 23. But this, perhaps you'll say, amounts to much the same Thing : For if the putting away of the filth of the Flesh does not save, it will follow, that the putting away of the filth of the Flesh (or an outward bodily Washing) is not Baptism ; because it is expressly affirmed of Baptism, that it does save. But this Conclusion will by no means hold ; for the whole Force of it lies in a supposed Absurdity, in that the Apostle shoud in the latter Part of the Sentence, deny that of Baptism, which he has affirmed of it in the former. But certainly, St. Peter will not more contradict himself here, than St. Paul has, i Cor. 15. 10. where he says, *But I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* This is exactly the same way of speaking ; and the Meaning of the Apostle is plainly this, viz. That tho' indeed he himself did labour, yet he was not the only Labourer ; but that the Grace of God did also labour with him. *I laboured ; yet not I.* He corrects himself ; lest any one should suppose that he ascrib'd that wholly to himself, which ought moreover, and more principally to be ascrib'd to the Grace of God. And thus we may, and ought to interpret the Words of St. Peter now before us. *Baptism saves us ; yet not Baptism ; not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh,* not

not the outward and bodily Washing only ; † but also, and more principally, the answer of a good Conscience towards God. The Caution he here gives, is not, as Barclay very idly and extravagantly supposes, directed to those, who, by the Comparison introduced in the foregoing Verse, might be induced to believe that Water-Baptism was the true Christian Baptism ; but to those, who by his saying of Baptism that it saves, might be in danger of believing that the bare outward Washing, or Baptism alone, would be sufficient to save them, without that inward Purity of Mind which is signified by that Ceremony. And this, I suppose, no sober Christian ever did, or can affirm.

§. 24. The only Thing besides, that looks like an Argument against Water-Baptism, you have at p. 22. where George Gibson tells us, that the Apostle (Paul) early saw the Weakness of that shadowy Baptism ; and then cites 1 Cor. 1. 14. *I thank God, I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gains, &c.* This Objection was put to me at the Conference ; and tho' this Scribbler avers, (m) that I did not then answer it, but with a needless Question ; viz. *How do you know that Water-Baptism is here spoken of?* yet if the Reader will but turn to my Conference, p. 45, 46. he will find that I did then answer him another way ; as I have also done more fully, in my Remarks afterwards. Now methinks, a modest and ingenuous Man, would not have insisted upon this Objection again, till he had examined and confuted what was there said, in order to take it off : Instead of which, George Gibson has contented himself with saying, that I have taken up near Three Leaves in my Book, to quibble off the Question. This is his old Play again. Every Thing that he either does

† That the Words *not* and *but*, do in Scripture-Phrase frequently signify *not only* and *but also*, or *more principally*, is too plain to need any further Proof. See Dr. Bennet Conf. Quak. Chap. 24.

(m) P. 10.

not understand, or does not like, he calls *Quibbling*; at which rate, a *Child* or a *Fool* may answer any thing. But if this be true, why did not *George Gibson*, or some of his wiser Friends, expose these *Quibbles*? I dare say, they would have done it, if they could have told how. And therefore, the plain Truth of the Matter seems to be, that these *Quibbles* are plain and solid Answers, which they dare not to look in the Face, because they were not able to confute them. The Reader may make himself a Judge of this Matter, if he will but have Recourse to my Conference. There they stand; and there I perceive they are like to stand, for any thing that the *Quakers* have to say against them.

S. 25. I shall stay no longer upon this Head, than whilst I take notice of Two Things. The first is, *George Gibson's* persisting to defend that senseless Reply of *Joseph Middleton* to my Argument for *Water-Baptism*, drawn from *Mat. 28. 19. Go ye therefore, &c.* viz. That the Word *BAPTIZE*, might in that place literally signify *Washing in Blood*, as well as in Water. The Occasion of which Answer, was, my pressing him with a Quotation from *R. Barclay*; where he expressly contended, that this Text ought to be understood literally; which he proved from this Maxim; viz. *That we ought not to go from the literal Sense of Words, unless some urgent Necessity forceth us thereunto: But no Necessity forceth in this Place, &c.* Now, said I, if this Text must be understood literally, as *R. Barclay* says, it must be understood of *Water-Baptism*; because nothing else can be meant by *Baptizing* in a *literal Sense*, but *Washing in Water*. To this, as I before observed, *Joseph Middleton* very roundly reply'd, that it might signify *Washing in Blood* as well. This Reply of *Joseph Middleton*, as absurd as it is, I say, our Friend *Gibson* undertakes to justify. And how? Why, by alledging these Two Texts; viz. *Rev. 1. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our*

our sins in his own Blood. And Chap. 7. Ver. 14. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. But hark you, George ! Did Christ wash us from our Sins by his Blood literally ? Did those who came out of great Tribulation, wash their Robes, and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb, literally ? Or was it possible for our Lord, to command his Disciples to go and wash all Nations in his, or any other Blood literally ! I tell thee once more, that thou hadst as good say, that Christ commanded his Disciples to go and Wash all Nations in Wine or Strong Drink ; and if this were to be done by an inward Washing, then for ought I know the Quakers may have as much Reason as any People to pretend that they are truly baptized. But I see plainly that these Men are resolved to Face People down with the most glaring Absurdities, rather than acknowledge themselves to be in the Wrong in any thing they say ; which if it be not a Sign of the most hardened Obstinacy, I know not for my part what is. To be short, the Quakers pretend that the Baptism which the Apostles were here commanded to Administer, was the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ; but this is impossible, according to Barclay's Maxim : For the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a figurative Baptism, as every one knows who understands common Sense. Wherefore it is a vain thing for the Quakers to talk any longer of a Baptism in Blood ; for this Baptism in Blood must be either the same with the Baptism of the Spirit, or it must be a Baptism distinct from it. If the former, then it must be a figurative Baptism, and consequently cannot be the Baptism enjoin'd in this place. A literal Baptism in Blood cannot be supposed, or if it could, it would do the Quakers no Service ; for then it would be a Baptism distinct from the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ; and consequently the Quakers would be as much in the wrong in pleading for that, as we are in pleading for Water-Baptism. — But why do

I thus gravely dispute against an Assertion which deserves only to be ridicul'd? Who does not see, but those who will not see, that *Barclay's Argument* does not only overthrow the *Quakers* own Doctrines, but does more effectually establish ours. For if the Baptism which our Saviour commanded his Apostles to Administer to all Nations, was not the Baptism *with the Holy Ghost* (as it could not be by *Barclay's Rule*) it undeniably follows that it must be *Water-Baptism*, because there is no other Baptism but these two, that ever was, or can be pretended to be the Christian Baptism; as the *Quakers* themselves have (c) owned upon another occasion.

C. 26. The next thing I shall take notice of is (what I have before just hinted at) *George Gibson's* neat way of accounting for St. Peter's commanding the believing *Gentiles* to be baptized with Water, after they were actually baptized with the *Holy Ghost*; the History of which you have, *Acts* 10. 48. (d) Now, says he, as to the Apostle Peter's commanding the believing *Gentiles* to be baptized with Water, after they had received the *Holy Ghost*, 'tis granted. But let us consider that there is a state of Infancy in Grace as in Nature; and Understanding was a gradual Gift to the Apostles as well as to others. Well said *George!* This now is plain dealing, and shows what thou art, all at once. But it had been a little plainer if thou hadst said (what thy meaning most certainly is) that *Peter* did indeed believe that *Water-Baptism* was necessary, and for this Reason commanded the *Gentiles* to be baptized with it. But then *Peter* was mistaken, and wanted better Instruction, which were he now alive he might have from *George Gibson* and his Friends. Take notice of this, Reader, and be astonished! This *Quaker* says, he knows whether *Water-Baptism* be necessary or not, better than St. *Peter*! What say you now? Will you follow

(c) p. 18.

(d) p. 12.

Man that dares to set up his own Judgment and Understanding, in opposition to the Judgment and Understanding of an Apostle? — But what wonder is it that this Man, who is only a Retailer of other Mens Ware, should fall into this Error, when that grand Heretick *Barclay*, his Master, has, tho' more modestly, asserted the same thing? † Although, says he, it should be granted, that for a season they (the Apostles) were so far mistaken, as to judge Water to belong to Baptism, which however I find no necessity of granting, I see not any great Absurdity would hence follow: For 'tis plain they did mistake that Commission (i. e. the Commission to go and teach all Nations, &c.) as to a main part of it for a season, — since some time after they judged it unlawful to teach the Gentiles. Yet, Peter himself scrupled it, until by a Vision constrained thereto; for which, after he had done it, he was for a season, until better informed, judged by the rest of his Brethren. The Force of which Argument lies here. St. Peter, and together with him the rest of the Apostles, actually were mistaken as to one Branch of their Commission, judging it unlawful to teach the Gentiles, notwithstanding they were by their Commissions authorized and commanded so to do. Therefore it was possible that they might be mistaken as to any other part of their Commission, and consequently suppose that the Baptism which they were commanded to administer to all Nations, was *Water-Baptism*, when in reality it was the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*. A little after, he supposes this not only to have been possible, but really to have been the Case. For, says he, (speaking of *Water-Baptism*) no wonder if Peter that thought it so strange, notwithstanding all that had been professed before, and spoken by Christ, that the Gentiles should be made partakers of the Gospel — was apt to put this Ceremony upon them. George Gibson argues exactly after the same manner. For immediately after he had alledged, that

† Apol. Prop. 12. §. 9.

Understanding was a gradual Gift to the Apostles, he gives this for an Instance : Peter knew not that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, before it was shewn him by an extraordinary Vision ; plainly insinuating, that St. Peter administred Water-Baptism, thro' the like mistake, by which he thought that the Gentiles were not to have the Gospel preached to them.

S. 27. But I do wonder in my Heart that Men are not ashamed to maintain such scandalous Falshoods ! The Vision they talk of can be no other than that of the Sheet, *Act's 10.* which St. Peter saw immediately before he was sent by the Spirit to preach to Cornelius. But where do they learn that till then St. Peter did not think it lawful to teach the Gentiles ? I am sure no such thing is expressly asserted, either in the Rehearsal of this Vision, or in any other place of Scripture : Nor do I clearly understand, by what way of arguing they would infer it. What seems most likely to be their meaning, and the most that can be said, is this, viz. That if St. Peter had known before that it was lawful for him to teach the Gentiles, he would have had no occasion of being taught it by a particular Vision ; which Argument would have some Force in it, if it did appear that this was the Design and Purpose of the Vision. But this is not true ; for the End of this Vision was only to show, that the Wall of Partition, between the Jews and the Gentiles, was now broken down, and thereby to rectify a mistake which did at that time commonly prevail, viz. That it was not lawful to maintain a strict and intimate Familiarity, and particularly to eat, with any but those who were circumcised. For Proof of this, the Reader need only consider the Vision it self, together with the use St. Peter has made of it at the 28th Verse of the Chapter above quoted ; where speaking to Cornelius, and those that were with him, he says, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a Man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another Nation, i.e. (as the

the learned Dr. Hammond has excellently well Paraphrased) "Ye know that the Laws of the Jewish Religion permit not a Jew to converse * familiarly with any Gentile. But God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." You see here that the Apostle concluded nothing from this Vision, but only this, viz. That the Distinction between Jew and Gentile was now wholly ceased, and consequently that it was lawful for him to converse or keep Company with both, with the same freedom and familiarity. Now 'tis very consistent to suppose, that St. Peter was ignorant of this; and yet at the same time very sensible, that it was not only Lawful, but his bounden Duty, in due Season, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. For to teach is one thing; to eat, drink, and use any other more familiar Converse, another; and consequently the unlawfulness of the latter, does by no means imply the unlawfulness of the former. There may therefore be a very good account given, why St. Peter was prepared to go to Cornelius by this Vision, without supposing him not to understand our Saviour's Commission. And indeed this Supposition is so very Extravagant, and attended with so many ill Consequences, that it would be more safe and more rational to let this Difficulty shift for it self, than to have recourse

* The Original is κοινᾶς ἐπεστήθας ἀλοούλῳ; By which words, (says Dr. Lightfoot) is not to be understood as if a Jew might have no dealing at all with a Gentile, for they might Walk, and Talk, and Traffick with them, and it was within a little of impossible to do otherwise, they living, exceeding many of them, in Heathen Cities, and Gentiles came continually in way of Trade to Jerusalem. But the unlawfulness of their conversing with the Gentiles, was conversing in near and more close Society, as the word κοινᾶς signifieth, and that especially in these two things, viz. Not to eat with them, and not to go into their Houses. Lightf. Comment. in loc. op. Vol. i. p. 844. I thought it necessary to make this Note, lest it should be thought that before this Vision St. Peter judged it unlawful to maintain any sort of Communication with the Gentiles; which if it were true, he must of course have thought it unlawful to teach them, because teaching implies some sort of Converse.

to such a way of solving it. St. Peter not know, before this Vision, that it was lawful to preach to the Gentiles! How is this possible? Did not our Saviour's Commission run, *Go ye and teach, mārm m' ḥvñ, all the Nations*, i. e. all the Gentiles? Were not the Apostles told expressly, that they were to be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth? Were they not strictly enjoined to go *tis tōr x̄oquv ḥ̄t̄m*, into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every Creature? Were they not plainly informed that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in Christ's Name, *eis māra m' ḥvñ*, among all the Gentiles? Why, yes. But (if you will believe Barclay) the Education of the Apostles as Jews, and their Propensity to adhere and stick to the Jewish Religion, did so far influence them, that even after Christ's Resurrection, and the pouring forth of the Spirit, they could not receive nor admit the teaching of the Gentiles, tho' Christ in his Commission commanded them to preach to them. I do not despair of that Man's being able to swallow down any thing, who does not nauseate such wretched Evasions as these! For 1st, How could the Education of the Apostles, as Jews, give them this Prejudice, when the Jews themselves never thought it unlawful to teach and instruct any sorts of Persons in the Principles of their Religion. Even the Pharisees were so far from scrupling this, that on the contrary they were, upon all occasions, very forward to, and diligent in it, compassing Sea and Land to gain Proselytes, as our Saviour testifies of them, Mat. 23. 15. It was indeed a general Opinion at that time among the Jewish Converts, that the Benefits of the Gospel did belong to none but those who either were, or would submit to be circumcised and keep the Law. Whence it was that they were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghost, (Acts 10. 45.) And that God should grant to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life, Acts 11. 18. i. e. That those who were uncircumcised, should be vouchsafed the same Privileges.

vileges with those who were circumcised. But that it was an unlawful thing to persuade the Gentiles to Embrace the Gospel, is what I am confident even the most exact amongst the Jews never did or could suppose. All that they scrupled was, as I said before, conversing familiarly, and particularly eating with such Men as these. And accordingly we may observe, that St. Peter's transgressing this Rule, was that, and only that, for which he was blamed by the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, after he came from Cornelius. *Thou wentest in, said they, to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them,* Acts 11. 2. In this they thought St. Peter had done amiss, not in that he had taught them; for if they had, they would without doubt have blamed him for the one, as well as for the other. But, 2dly, How strongly soever the Apostles may be supposed to have been prejudiced against Preaching to the Gentiles by the Prevalency of Education, our Saviour had before his Ascension taken sufficient care to remove this Prejudice. For I do not understand what he could have done more, than to tell them plainly and positively, that their Business was to go and preach to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews: Which that he did do more than once, is evident from the Places that have been already cited, and what the Quakers dare not deny. Wherefore Barclay's affirming, that notwithstanding all this, the Apostles could not receive nor admit the teaching of the Gentiles, is no better than supposing them to be void of common Sense; for who that had common Sense, could in the least doubt of its being lawful to teach the Gentiles, when they had such full and express Directions from one who had Authority to command it, so to do? One would think that Man little better than a Fool, who having received from his Prince a Commission to go as Ambassador into a Foreign Country, to transact some Affairs of State, should yet think it unlawful for him to act as his Commission directs. Just such sort of Men does Barclay suppose the Apostles to have

have been ; which if it be not most highly reflecting upon Almighty God, a Scandal upon the Apostles, and upon our Holy Religion in general, I leave to any reasonable Man to determine. I shall only say, that if the Case were thus with St. Peter, I do not understand what good Effect the Vision could have had upon him ; for methinks a plain and express Injunction received from our Saviour before his Ascension, should weigh as much as any particular Vision afterwards. But 3dly, I shall add one Observation more, which will put this Matter beyond all Controversy ; which is, that Fact shews St. Peter not to have been so very ignorant as these Men would make him. For it was this very Apostle who told the Jews long before this Vision happened, even at the Day of Pentecost, that *the Promise was to them and — to all that were afar off.* From whence it is as plain as Words can make it, that in St. Peter's Opinion the Benefits of the Gospel were not to be confined to the Jews, but to be extended to all Nations universally ; and consequently, that all Nations were to have the Gospel preached to them. Add to this, that before this Vision happened, the Gospel was preached to the *Samaritans* by St. Peter and others ; which manifestly shows, that they understood our Saviour's Commission rightly. For it is to be observed, that our Saviour in his Life-time, when he first of all sent forth the Twelve, gave them express Orders *not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into any City of the Samaritans*, Mat. 10. 5. Here now the *Gentiles* and the *Samaritans* were upon the same foot ; both excluded for a time from having the Gospel preached to them. Well, but how then did it happen, that notwithstanding this Injunction, the Apostles, within a little while after our Saviour's Ascension, did preach to the *Samaritans*? Why the Reason, I think, is very clear, viz. That our Saviour, before his Ascension, had enlarged their Commission, and expressly told them, that they were to preach the Gospel in Samaria.

ria; as well as in Jerusalem and Judea, Acts i. 8. But this very Commission by which they were enjoined to preach to the Samaritans, did also as expressly enjoin them to preach to the Gentiles: Now that the Apostles should understand that part of the Commission which related to the former, and not that which related to the latter, a Man may indeed confidently assert, who is resolved to serve a Cause at any rate, but common Sense will not suffer him in earnest to believe. It would be ridiculous to alledge, that such a Thing might happen shro' the great Prejudice which the Jews had against the Gentiles: for the Jews had an equal Aversion to both these sorts of People, or if there was any difference, it seems to have been on the side of the Samaritans.

§. 28. I have been thus long in confuting this Assertion of the Quakers, not for any weight that there is in the Argument by which they would establish it, but upon the account of its ill Tendency; and because it is made use of to support another so very scandalous, that even a Deist could not well have invented a worse, viz. That the Apostles, and particularly St. Peter, either might, or actually did, enjoin Water-Baptism as a Thing necessary, thro' Mistake, i. e. not understanding the true Nature of the Christian Baptism. Which Assertion, if any one can believe to be true, he may with equal Reason deny any one Article of the Christian Faith. I do insist upon it, and challenge any Man to deny it without Blasphemy, that the Holy Ghost, from his Descent at Pentecost, to the End of their Ministry, did constantly, and as Occasion required, inform the Apostles infallibly, in every particular that it was necessary for them to be informed in. Now I will put it to any one of common Sense, whether it was not necessary that the Apostles, from the very beginning of their Preaching, should have been informed, what Sort of Baptism it was they were to Administer? 'Tis evident that it was, because

their Business from the beginning was to baptize those to whom they preached, and who were thereby converted to the Faith. Wherefore if the Apostles, at their very first Entrance upon their Office, had been under any false Notions concerning the Christian Baptism, the Holy Ghost, under whose immediate Influence and Direction they were, would undoubtedly have forthwith undeceived them, and consequently they could not be mistaken in this Point, no not for a season. But in truth there was no manner of Occasion for the Holy Ghost to inform the Apostles what Baptism they were to Administer, because our Saviour had done it before. The Commission to go and baptize all Nations, was given by Christ in his own Person; the Apostles therefore even then must necessarily be supposed to have understood what it was to baptize; for our Saviour could not enjoin them to do they knew not what. Besides, the Apostles made Proselytes all the while during our Saviour's Ministry; and they baptized those whom they converted. And this Baptism which they administered before our Saviour's Death, was the same which they were commanded to administer after his Ascension; for we read of no Alteration. Was it possible then that the Apostles should all this while have not understood the true Nature of the Christian Baptism, when they practised it by our Saviour's Command, and were under his immediate Care and Inspection? Why yes; 'tis but for the Quakers to suppose either that our Saviour himself was for a Season, i. e. all his Life-time, mistaken in his own Baptism, or that the Apostles were more blind and untractable than even they themselves.

§. 29, The whole Matter in brief is this. Understanding was (as George Gibson says) a gradual Gift to the Apostles as well as to others. That is, their Knowledge in Divine Things was not communicated to them all at once, but by degrees, as Occasion required, as it seemed meet

meet to the Divine Wisdom to impart it to them. Thus, for Instance, the Apostles were not informed that the Jewish Law was abrogated by the Christian Institution, till the Time came that the Gentiles were to be called in; as is evident from the Case of St. Peter just now rehearsed. The Reason of which doubtless was, that the Apostles till then preaching wholly amongst those who had been already Circumcised; had no great Occasion to determine whether that and the rest of the Legal Rites were necessary or not. And besides, it might seem more fitting and convenient to the Blessed Author of our Religion, knowing the Obstinacy of that People, and their Tenaciousness of their ancient Customs, to suffer them in the Practice of them for a while, rather than to call them from them all at once, which might have given them an invincible disgust to the new Economy which was now to be Established. But whatever the Reasons were, why it pleased God to conceal either this or any other Part of Christian Knowledge for a time, thus much is certain, viz. That there were some Parts of it, which we cannot without the utmost Absurdity, and the highest Reflection upon his Wisdom, suppose not to have been communicated to the Apostles, from their very first Entrance upon their Ministry; of this sort are all those Points, the Knowledge whereof was from the beginning E S S E N T I A L to the Execution of the Apostolick Office. One of these *Baptism* most certainly was. For the Business of the Apostles was to Preach to, and *Baptize all Nations*, beginning at Jerusalem; i.e. preaching the Gospel first to the Jews. Now tho' it was possible for the Apostles to preach to and baptize the Jews, without knowing whether Circumcision and the rest of the Jewish Ordinances were designed to continue or not, yet 'tis plain that they could not possibly baptize the Jews or any else, without knowing what that Baptism was which they were to Administer. The Apostles therefore could no more be ignorant

ignorant what it was to baptize according to our Saviour's Institution, than they could be ignorant what it was to preach. Much less could they be ignorant of it so long as this Argument of the Quakers supposes. For it deserves well to be noted, that this Vision by which St. Peter was taught that the Distinction between Jew and Gentile was ceased, did not happen till the Year of Christ XL or thereabouts, which was VII Years after our Lord's Ascension. All this Time, it seems, the Apostles were ignorant whether Water did belong to the Essence of the Christian Baptism or not; or rather, thro' Mistake, they had supposed that it did, and practised it accordingly. Nay, for any thing we are told to the contrary, they were under this Mistake a great deal longer; for they do not determine how long this State of Infancy in their Understandings lasted, and when it was that their Eyes began to be open'd. They only say in general, (which, by the way; we have only their Word for) that they did not always remain under this Mistake; and this they think (a) sufficeth. Well, let it suffice those whom it may suffice. The Apostles were at least under this Mistake till after the Vision; for it was after the Vision, that St. Peter commanded Cornelius, and his Company, to be baptized with Water. That is to say, The Apostles had now for Seven Years been Preaching and Baptizing; in which Time, they had gone thro' Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, i.e. the whole Jewish Nation, and yet all this while had been Administering a wrong Baptism! What think you, Reader? Is not this a most goodly Notion? Does it not bespeak a strange Sort of Perverseness in these Men, that rather than give up a favourite Opinion, they scruple not to reproach the Apostles, and even the Spirit of God himself? Let any one now judge, whether I wrong'd them, when I said, that they are the most

(a) Barclay, ib.

Poisonous Sect that now infests the Church of Christ. See, we have indeed, besides the Quakers, that are bad enough; but I do not know of any (except it be profess'd Libertines) who have advanced Principles, which do so directly tend to unhinge Christianity, and which do open so wide a Gap to Deism and Infidelity. Let such as these applaud the Quakers for their way of Arguing. But I hope, every sober Person, as he cannot but abhor such impious Assertions, so he will from hence be sufficiently warned, what Sort of Men they are, and how dangerous a Thing it is to follow them. Our Saviour, in his Lifetime, promised his Apostles, that the Comforter, whom the Father would send in his Name, should teach them ALL THINGS, and guide them into ALL TRUTH. The Meaning of which, can certainly be no less than this; viz. That the Holy Spirit should, upon all Occasions, so influence and direct them, that they should be in no danger of being mistaken in any one Thing that it was necessary for them to know. But was our Saviour as good as his Word? Did the Comforter teach the Apostles all Things, and lead them into all Truth? No, say the Quakers, he did not! He fail'd them in one of the Essential Points of the Christian Knowledge! He suffer'd them for many Years to administer a wrong Baptism! Our Saviour commanded them, to go and baptize all Nations with the Holy Ghost: They, contrary to his Command, went, and baptized with Water; and all this thro' mere Ignorance, and because they knew no better! Take notice, Friends, that ye now stand charged not only with Heresy, but with downright BLASPHEMY: Clear your selves from it, if you can!

§. 30. I had like to have slipt over one Thing; which indeed, for any thing of Argument there is in it, might have been omitted, but upon the Account of the Falshood it contains, deserves to be animadverted

misadverted upon. (b) Peter's Command, says George Gibson, in the Place above quoted, (i. e. Act. 10. 48.) doth not prove Water-Baptism to be necessary to Salvation, or to be a Perpetual Standing Ordinance in the Church of Christ, any more than his compelling the Gentiles to be circumcised, Gal. 2. 14. proves the necessary Continuance of Circumcision. This likewise he borrow'd from his Master Barclay. (c) Why, says he, doth Peter's commanding Cornelius to be baptized at that time, infer Water-Baptism to continue; more than his constraining, which is more than commanding, the Gentiles in general to be circumcised, and keep the Law? Is it so, Friends, do ye say? Did St. Peter ever constrain, or compel the Gentiles in general to be circumcised, and keep the Law? Where did ye learn thus much? Barclay quotes no body for it, but leaves us to depend upon his Infallibility. George Gibson is more civil, and refers us to Gal. 2. 14. Now Reader, pray turn to the Place, and admire at the Carelessness (if it be Carelessness) of these Men. The Case, as you will find, was no other than this: St. Peter coming down to Antioch, where St. Paul (the great Apostle of the Gentiles) was, did for a time eat and converse freely with the Gentiles; v. 12. This, tho' (as has been before observ'd,) it was what the Jews esteem'd to be a Thing unlawful, was yet consonant to the Gospel-Liberty, which St. Peter had lately been acquainted with by the Vision; wherein he was taught to call no man common or unclean. But notwithstanding this, it seems, that upon the coming of certain Jewish Christians to Antioch, St. Peter, for fear of giving Offence to them, began to separate himself from the Gentiles; which Practice of his had such an Influence over the rest, that the other Jews dissembled with him likewise, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their Dissimulation; v. 12, 13. These Proceedings, if not timely prevented, might have been of ill Consequence,

(b) P. 12.

(c) Apol. Prop. 12. S. 9.

bring

bringihg Men into an Opinion that the Jewish Law was still of Force ; which St. Paul perceiving, withdrew St. Peter to the face ; and said, *If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews ; why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews ? V. 14.* As if he had said ; " Thou hast hitherto eaten and conversed freely with the Gentiles ; why then dost thou now separate thy self, and by this means compel (i. e. bring) the Gentiles to think it necessary for them to observe the Customs and Manners of the Jews ? This was the whole of the Case : From whence, 1st. I observe, That St. Peter did not compel the Gentiles in general, as Barclay has affirm'd : He compell'd only those Gentiles, with whom he conversed ; i. e. the Gentiles at Antioch. 2^{dly}. I ask, How did St. Peter constrain, or compel the Gentiles at Antioch, to be circumcis'd and keep the Law ? Did he command them ? No : But, says Barclay, he did something more ; for Constraining is more than Commanding : That is, if you can suppose that St. Peter seized them by main Force, bound them Hand and Foot, and circumcis'd them whether they would or not. But with Robert Barclay's Leave, the Constraint, or Compulsion which the Apostle made use of, was not only *not more*, but a great deal less than commanding. For he compell'd them no otherwise than by his own Example, as appears evidently from the Context. St. Peter, and the rest of the Jews, withdrew themselves from the Gentiles. The Gentiles observing this, and not knowing the Grounds upon which they did it, concluded with themselves, or at least were in danger of concluding, that the Jewish Law was still obligatory. This was what St. Paul call'd Compelling. So that if any among the Gentiles were actually compell'd, it was only by drawing a wrong Inference from St. Peter's Behaviour. Does not this now fall a great deal short of Commanding ? Surely it does. For had St. Peter commanded the Gentiles to be circumcised, it must have been his Will and

and Desire that they should be circumcis'd ; because a Command always implies a Desire of the Thing commanded : Whereas St. Peter might, by his Behaviour, give an Occasion to the *Gentiles* to think it necessary for them to be circumcis'd, and yet at the same time not have the least Intention to oblige them to any such Thing. But, 3dly. Suppose St. Peter had even commanded (and, whatever *Barclay* says, I do not think he could have done more) the *Gentiles* at *Antioch* to be circumcis'd ; how does this prove any thing against *Water-Baptism* ? Why thus : If because St. Peter commanded the *Gentiles* to be Baptized, it follows that *Water-Baptism* is of perpetual Obligation, it will follow, because the same Apostle commanded the *Gentiles* to be circumcis'd, that therefore Circumcision is of perpetual Obligation. But this Argument will by no means hold : For the Reason why we believe *Water-Baptism* to be of perpetual Obligation, is not barely because it was once commanded, but because it was commanded as a *Thing necessary*, i.e. an Essential Branch of the Christian Institution ; which is more than can be affirmed of Circumcision. For as to St. Peter, he could not possibly enjoin Circumcision to the *Gentiles* at *Antioch*, as a *Thing necessary* ; because it had been determined but a little before at the Council of *Jerusalem*, (at which Council St. Peter was present, and gave his Opinion) that the Law of Circumcision was no longer of any Force. If therefore he did command these *Gentiles* to be circumcised, it was for the same Reason that St. Paul circumcised *Timothy*, viz. because of the *Jews* : And this (whatever St. Peter's Management in this Case was) is assign'd as the Reason of it, v. 12. of this Chapter ; where 'tis expressly said, that *Peter* withdrew himself, fearing them which were of the Circumcision. The *Quakers* will tell us sometimes, that the Apostles enjoined *Water-Baptism* for the same Reason ; and if they could prove this, they would do something. But I have, in my Conference, given several Reasons

to shew the Vanity of this Objection; which Reasons, because George Gibson has not been so civil as to take any notice of, I shall therefore be no farther civil to him, than to recommend them once more to his more serious Perusal.

C. 31. II. And thus much may suffice to have been spoken concerning the first Point; viz. what George Gibson hath said, in order to prove that Water-Baptism is not the Christian Baptism. The Second Thing to be consider'd, is, What he hath said to prove, That Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a Perpetual Baptism. Under which Head, he has attempted to make out these Two Things; viz. 1st, That it ever was; 2dly, That it ever is to be. Now, as to the former of these Propositions, the Reader is to observe, That herein he flatly contradicts what Joseph Middleton has already granted. For Joseph Middleton (as may be seen, Conf. p. 20.) did grant, That the Baptism with the Holy Ghost did not commence till the Day of Pentecost; where's this Man has given it as his Judgment, That ^(d) there never was a Prophet, or a Righteous Man since the Creation of the World, but who was washed and sanctified by the Baptizing Power of the Holy Ghost; i. e. who was not baptized with the Holy Ghost. Is it not now a very strange Thing, Reader, that these Men, who are at every turn cracking of their Inspirations, should, in a Point of Doctrine wherein they are press'd by their Adversaries, thus foully contradict one another? Surely, George, the Spirit forsook either thee when thou wer't writing, or Joseph Middleton when he was disputing! — But I shall leave Joseph Middleton and you to agree upon this Point between your selves, and turn to your Arguments. Now, in order to show that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ever was, George Gibson hath produced several Texts of Scripture, in which the Gifts

(d) P. II.

of the Holy Ghost is spoken of, as having been dispensed to several Persons in all Ages. Thus it is said of Simeon, that (e) the Holy Ghost was upon him ; of John Baptist, that he (f) should be filled with the Holy Ghost ; of Elizabeth and Zacharias, that they were (g) filled with the Holy Ghost ; of David, that the Holy Ghost (h) spake by his Mouth. Lastly, He quotes the Apostle St. Peter, affirming in general, that (i) of old time, holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Whence he concludes, (and indeed a wonderful Conclusion it is) that the Gifts of the Holy Ghost were dispensed long before Pentecost, even in all Ages. For, says he, (k) Doubtless Abraham, the Friend of God, was honoured with that Gift ; also Enoch, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, and a Cloud of Holy Ancients. Now what Pains has this Man taken to prove that which nobody denies ! Did I ever say, that the Gifts of the Holy Ghost have not been dispensed in all Ages ? Why, yes ; if any Credit is to be given to what George Gibson has said. For, says he, (l) Altho' it was said, Joh. 7. 39. The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified ; is it safe to conclude from these Words, that it was given to none in any degree, till Jesus was ascended ? — — And again, a little after : He (i. e. St. John.) did not express himself in such a restricted Sense, as to say, that the Holy Ghost was not as yet given to any, till he (Christ) was ascended ; for it appears to the contrary, from divers Places of Scripture. And then he immediately quotes those Texts, which have been already referr'd to. This is a very plain Insinuation, that I have concluded that the Holy Ghost was given to none in any degree, till Jesus was ascended ; than which, there cannot any Thing be more scandalously false. For I have

(e) Luk. 2. 25, 26. (f) Luk. 1. 15. (g) Luk. 1. 31, 67.
 (h) Act. 1. 16. (i) 2 Pet. 1. 21. (k) P. 26. (l) P. 24, 25.

declared it my Opinion in express terms, (b) that the Assurances of the Spirit working Faith and Obedience, are Gifts which Men have had in all Ages. But what of all this? Does it follow from hence that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost has been dispensed in all Ages? Does it? Ay marry, does it, or else our Friend Gibson is like to come off but sorrowly. For thus and only thus he argues, (c) How come holy Men to be such, but by the Sanctification of the Holy Ghost? Dost the Holy Ghost sanctify any Man without washing him, making clean his Heart? Can any be thus washed, and not baptized, which is all one? And then having quoted some Texts of Scripture, where there is mention made of washing, or being washed from Sin, he concludes, What can be more clear, than that there was a washing or baptizing, cleansing, sanctifying Gift of the Holy Spirit, or Ghost, in all the former Dispensations? Surely our Opponent's Memory mightily failed him, when he construed John's words so pervertingly to make them serve his Assertion, That no one was baptized with the Holy Ghost before the Day of Pentecost. No, George, the failure is not in my Memory, but in thy Understanding. Thou art all this while besides the Question; nor is there any Consequence in what thou say'st. That there was a Sanctifying Gift of the Spirit in all the former Dispensations is true; and that those who were by such Gifts as these actually Sanctified or made Holy, might in some Sense be said to be cleansed, washed, and, if you will, baptized with the Holy Ghost, I do not deny; (although that such Persons, or any other, were ever said to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, before our Saviour's Ascension, I do not find;) but it does not therefore follow, that those who were thus Sanctified by the Holy Ghost, were baptized with the Holy Ghost, in that Sense wherein our Saviour used that Phrase, when he promised it to his Disciples under the New Testament. The Reason is, be-

(b) Conference, p. 26. (c) P. 26, 27. and vns to cause

cause when any Term is used in a figurative Sense (as most certainly the word *Baptism* is, when applied to the *Spirit* as the *Matter* of it) it will admit of as many different Significations, as there are different Things which bear any Resemblance to that which the Word doth properly and literally express. Now the Question between the *Quakers* and Us, is not what may in any Sense be called Baptism with the Holy Ghost, but what was actually called so by our Saviour, when he said, *John truly baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*; and by *John Baptist*, when pointing to *Jesus*, he said, *This is he who baptizeth, or shall baptize with the Holy Ghost*. This I say is the Question; because it is upon these Promises, and no other, that the *Quakers* found their Doctrine, viz. That the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is the Christian Baptism; and consequently it can be of no manner of Advantage to them, altho' it be granted, that those Gifts of the Spirit which have been dispensed in all Ages, might, upon the account of some resemblance that there is between the Sanctification wrought by them, and a literal Washing, be termed the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost*; unless it can be proved, that such Gifts were particularly intended by our Saviour in that Promise. This therefore is what *George Gibson* should prove, if he would say any thing to the Purpose; but this is impossible to be proved. For let the *Quakers* pretend what they will, that which our Saviour and *John Baptist* spake of under the Name or Appellation of the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, was not only peculiar to the Gospel Dispensation, but was not given before our Saviour's Ascension. This I have, in my Conference proved by such plain Texts of Scripture, that I think it cannot bear any further Dispute. *George Gibson* has not taken notice of so much as one of these Texts, but flyly flipt them over as he has every thing else that is of any Importance; he was afraid, it may be, of being

ing (o) imposed upon, as he says Joseph Middleton was, i. e. that they should be so very full and conclusive of what they were brought to prove, that he should be forced to yield it up whether he would or no, and then he would have been quite spoil'd for writing *Vindications*. In the mean time, till he can prove those Texts to be inconclusive, he does but face down the Scriptures, if he says, as he said, p. 11. *That there never was a Holy Prophet, or Righteous Man, since the Creation of the World, but who was baptized with the Holy Ghost.* For the Disciples of Christ in his Life-time were doubtless good Men, and so were many of John's Disciples; and yet 'tis as clear as any thing can be, that none of these were baptized with the Holy Ghost. John declares plainly, that he did not baptize with the Holy Ghost; Christ promises this Baptism to his Apostles as a thing future, a little before his Ascension, *Ye SHALL be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* Now from this Consideration it will follow, 1st, That the bare partaking, or being cleansed by the Sanctifying Gift of the Spirit, cannot be what our Saviour promised under the Name of the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*; for these Gifts the Disciples of John, and of our Saviour, in his Life-time, were endued withal, and were thereby Sanctifyed. 2dly, Neither can the bare partaking even of the extraordinary or miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, be what our Saviour meant by the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*; for these likewise the Disciples of Christ were possessed of before his Ascension. But what then, you'll ask, is the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, if the partaking neither of the ordinary nor the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost be it? Why, George Gibson has by great chance stumbled upon it at p. 25. tho' he does not know it, where he observes, and very well, *That tho' it was said that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, we are not to infer from*

(o) P. 11.

trence,

shence, that it was not given to any in any degree till Jesus was ascended, but that it was not given SO PLENTIFULLY, as it was after Christ was ascended. Now had George Gibson made that Use of this Observation, and consider'd the whole Matter with that Care and Impartiality which he ought, he must, if his Judgment had not mightily fail'd him, have concluded, that what our Saviour and the Baptist spoke of under the Name of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, was that great and plentiful Effusion of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which Christ was to vouchsafe to his Church after his Ascension; and that the Apostles partaking of this great and plentiful Effusion, by being endued with the Gift of Tongues, and many other extraordinary Endowments, did partake of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and thereby became baptized with it.

Q. 32. This is the only Notion that I am able to frame concerning the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, so as to make it consistent with our Saviour's Promise, and agreeable to those other Texts of Scripture which do make mention of it: Which being once admitted of, my Assertion that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost was confined to the Apostles Days, i. e. began after our Saviour's Ascension, and ended with the Apostles, stands firm and immoveable. For as it is certain that the Church of God was never in any Age before blessed with such a plentiful Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost: So 'tis evident that neither has the Christian Church enjoyed such a plentiful Measure of the Gifts of the Spirit, since that great and remarkable Effusion ceased, which most certainly did during the Apostolick Age; i. e. before,

[†] I say the Extraordinary Gifts, because I do not find that any such are any where in Scripture stiled Baptized with the Holy Ghost. See Dr. Behnet Confut. Quak. Chap. 18.

least immediately after the Death of all the Apostles. St. John, who was the last of them, died not till the Year of Christ C, by which Time the extraordinary Presence of God's Spirit with his Church, which had for some time before been gradually decaying, was in a manner wholly removed, there being now no farther Occasion for it. For the Ends of this extraordinary Presence of God's Spirit, were to give Testimony to the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, and to qualify the Apostles and others to preach the Gospel to all Nations; both which Purposes by this time had been very fully and effectually answered. 'Tis true indeed, (as George Gibson hath observed) that our Saviour hath promised to be with his Church *always*, even to the end of the World; and has told us that the Comforter was to abide with us for ever. Accordingly there can be no Question, but the Sanctifying Gifts or Graces of God's Spirit, have and will be dispensed to Christians in all Ages. This George Gibson has taken great pains to prove, p. 27, 28, 29. where he has heaped together abundance of Scripture Proofs to shew, as he expresses himself, the Perpetuity of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, and virtuous cleansing; which is the chief of what he hath said to demonstrate, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ever was to be. But all this is nothing to the Purpose: For how does it follow, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ever is to be, because the Sanctifying or Cleansing Gifts of the Spirit ever are to be; any more than it follows, that because the Sanctifying Gifts of the Spirit always have been dispensed, therefore the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ever was? The latter of these Conclusions I have already shewn to be weak and insufficient, by proving that those Sanctifying Graces of God's Spirit, which were dispensed before our Saviour's Ascension, could not be what our Saviour meant by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. The former Conclusion must therefore be as weak, unless George Gibson can prove, that these

Sanctifying or Cleansing Gifts which are, and always will be dispensed, are what our Saviour means by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost ; which as yet I do not find he has so much as attempted. And indeed it will be to no purpose to attempt any thing of this kind, 'till he has overthrown that Notion of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, which has been already laid down. For if that which our Saviour meant by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, be that extraordinary Presence of the Spirit which God did vouchsafe to his Church in the beginnings of the Gospel, in order to the first general Establishment of the Christian Religion, 'tis plain that no Man in these Days can make any just Pretensions to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, (in our Saviour's Sense of that Phrase) by virtue of any Gifts or Graces of the Spirit whatsoever.

§. 33. There is indeed one Text which George Gibson has taken notice of, (and that is the only one) that seems to afford some colour for extending the Baptism with the Holy Ghost to all Ages. I mean the Words of St. Peter, who preaching to the Jews and those other devout Men out of every Nation under Heaven, concerning the Effusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost ; and telling them, that this was the Accomplishment of our Saviour's Promise, says, *The Promise is to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,* Acts 2. 39. Now before I give my Answer to this Objection, I can't forbear observing, how easily it might be taken off, would the Quakers but allow me the same liberty that they have taken themselves. For why might not I here make use of George Gibson's Maxim, viz. *That there is a State of Infancy in Grace as well as in Nature, and Understanding was a gradual Gift to the Apostles, as well as to others?* R. Barclay, and with him George Gibson, would persuade us, that St. Paul not only might be, but actually was mistaken, in the Extent of our Saviour's Commission to go and teach all Nations,

Nations, &c. Now why may not I as well suppose it possible, that the same Apostle was also mistaken, as to the Extent of this Promise concerning the Baptism with the Holy Ghost? But this way of removing Difficulties is really so scandalous, that were there no other way of removing this, I should think my self in Conscience obliged to give up my Point. Yea, let God be true, and every Man who opposes him a Liar. And therefore, to give that which I look upon to be the true Answer to this Argument; I must desire my Reader to look back to Verse 17, 18. of the same Chapter from whence this Text is quoted, where he will find a Prophecy of Joel, cited by the Apostle upon the very same occasion. *This, says he, is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall prophesy, and your young Men shall see Visions, and your old Men shall dream Dreams, &c.* Do but observe here the Extent of these Terms in which this Prophecy is expressed. I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophesy. And yet it is evident as well from the Nature of the Gifts, here mentioned, as from several other Circumstances, that this Promise was by no means either universal or perpetual, but limited to that particular Period of Time, between the Beginning of the Gospel, and the End of the Jewish State. It cannot therefore be inferred, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost was to be perpetual from hence, viz. That the Promise is said to belong to them and to their Children; any more than it can be inferred, that the Gift of Prophecy was to be perpetual, because it was promised to their Sons and Daughters, i.e. to their Children. And as to the Universality of the Promise, it seems to be plainly limited in the very words of the Text. For it is not said *absolutely*, it should be fulfilled upon all; but upon all, even as many as the Lord should call. Wherefore the Sense of the Apostle,

seems to be this ; That the Promise of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, was not limited to any particular Nation or People, as many of God's Promises before had been ; but did belong to all Nations, out of which God would chuse such Persons, as should to him seem most proper, and pour upon them the same Gifts, which they then saw poured forth upon the Apostles and others. And this was exactly verify'd in those early Days : For some Persons, out of every Nation under Heaven where the Gospel was planted, had some one or more of these extraordinary Gifts bestowed upon them.

§. 34. I have said enough, I think, to answer all those Arguments, by which the *Quakers* have endeavour'd to prove, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a Perpetual Baptism ; and withal, to wipe off that Aspersion which George Gibson and his Brethren have cast upon me ; viz. That *I have limited the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to One Generation*. For it appears, by what has been said, that what *I have limited to One Generation*, is not the *cleansing or sanctifying Gift of the Holy Ghost*, but that which our *Saviour* and *John Baptist* spoke of, under the Name of *the Baptism with the Holy Ghost* ; which *I have all along supposed* (and *I hope proved*) to be somewhat very distinct from those *Gifts or Graces*, by which Men are sanctify'd or made holy. But if *I have not prov'd this*, my bare supposing it, is enough to clear me from this Calumny : For if *I do suppose the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is something distinct from those Gifts or Graces by which Men are sanctify'd or made holy* ; it cannot be inferr'd from my denying the former to be perpetual, that *I deny the latter to be so likewise*.

§. 35. III. And now, I hope, little needs be added upon the Third Point ; viz. To reconcile the Doctrine of Baptism, as explain'd by me, with the Doctrine of

the Church of England. For the only Ground of George Gibson's charging me with Contradicting the Church of England, and all other Protestant Churches upon this Point, is, my Arguing (as he supposes) for the Use of Water, exclusive of the Spirit; i. e. as he explains himself, My (a) bolding, that Water, without the Holy Spirit, is sufficient to wash Souls from Sin, and consequently to save them. Accordingly George Gibson has fill'd about Two Pages in his (b) Book, with Passages cited from our Liturgy and Church-Catechism, wherein the Necessity of being regenerated by the Spirit, is either supposed, or expressly asserted, in Opposition to me, whom he pretends to have denied it. I did once suppose, that this might be only a Blunder of him and his Friends, in not taking notice of the Distinction I always made between being *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, and being *regenerated* by the Holy Ghost: But, upon Second Thoughts, I can see no Room for this Charitable Supposition. For those who will but take the Pains, just to run over my Conference, will find enough said, to secure any one from drawing such an Inference as this, unless it be those who are resolv'd to draw it, whether there be any Ground for it or not. At P. 26. I have expressly ascribed Faith and Obedience to the inward Operations of God's Spirit. At P. 31. where Joseph Middleton urged that Text of St. Paul, Rom. 8. 9. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; I expressly declared, That no one can be a living Member of Christ's Church, who does not partake of the Gifts or Graces of God's Spirit. And there it was that I made the Distinction between being *baptized* with the Holy Ghost, and being *regenerated* by the Holy Ghost. All this George Gibson could take notice of. For, speaking of the Reformed Churches, he saith, (c) They do not affirm Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and Regeneration, to be Two distinct Things. And again;

(a) P. 36. (b) P. 33, 34. (c) P. 32.

(d) Where

(d) Where is the Advantage of this Rector's Learning, that he boasts of ; affirming, that Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and Regeneration, are Two distinct Things ? This shows plainly, I say, that George Gibson took my Distinction right : And who, but those who are wilfully blind, must not have seen by this Distinction, that it is my Opinion, that this Regeneration, or inward new Birth, is necessary to Salvation, as well as the outward Washing with Water ? And yet notwithstanding these plain and express Declarations to the contrary, the Man has the Assurance to tell me, that I have argued for the Use of Water, exclusive of the Spirit ! Could this be Mistake ? No, George, thou knowest in thine own Conscience, that thou hast most grossly abused me ; and I pray God to give thee Grace, that thou mayst repent, and be forgiven.

§. 36. But does not our Church's Teaching that the Regeneration of the Spirit is perpetual and necessary, prove it to be the Doctrine of our Church, that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is perpetual and necessary ? Not in the least ; unless it could be proved to be the Doctrine of our Church, that this Regeneration is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. But this cannot be proved. For tho' it be true what George Gibson says ; viz. That our Church (e) does not affirm, that Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and Regeneration, are Two distinct Things ; nor yet deny, that by having the Spirit, Men are baptized with the Holy Ghost ; yet it is also false what he affirms elsewhere, viz. That it does (f) attribute the Essential Means of Salvation to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, by the Water of Regeneration : Or, as he says a little after, That the Church-Belief shews, that the Spirit's Baptism and Regeneration are one. That it does attribute Salvation to the outward Washing with Water, and the inward San-

(d) P. 35. (e) P. 32. (f) P. 34.

ification of the Spirit, I grant. But then, whether this inward Sanctification of the Spirit is, or is not the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, in the Scripture-Sense of that Phrase, our Church has not (that I know of) any where determin'd. It is true, we are exhorted in the Office of Publick Baptism, to call upon God, that the Persons to be Baptized, *may be baptized with Water, and with the Holy Ghost.* This George Gibson has taken notice of; and would (I suppose) infer from thence, that it is the Doctrine of our Church, that Baptism with the Holy Ghost, and Regeneration, are one and the same Thing. But this Consequence does by no means follow. For if it be supposed, that the Compilers of our Liturgy did not think *Regeneration* to be *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, in the Scripture-Sense of that Phrase; there will still be Resemblance enough between *Regeneration* and a *Proper Washing*, to warrant the Use of that figurative Expression: And 'tis by no means necessary, that when a Scripture-Phrase is made use of, it must always be used exactly in the same Sense wherein the Scriptures have used it. Besides, supposing that it was the Opinion of those who compiled our Liturgy, that *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, and *Regeneration*, are one and the same Thing; what, I would fain know, is all this to me? Am I bound to subscribe to every private Opinion which those Men had? I must know a Reason for it, e're I do. Had our Church made this Doctrine an Article of *Ministerial Conformity*, something might be said. But this it has not done; there being nothing either in the Canons, Articles, or Publick Offices, which does oblige me either to believe my self, or teach it to others, that those ordinary Gifts of God's Spirit, by which Men are regenerated, are what the Scripture means by the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost.*

S. 37. And now, George, I think I have fully answer'd thy Request ; which was, (g) That I would shew in plain Words, what particular Christian Sect holds the Doctrine of Water-Baptism in the Manner I have agreed. For it appears, that the Church of England holds the Doctrine of Water-Baptism in this manner ; and consequently, that notwithstanding any thing thou hast to alledge against me as to this Point, I am a true Minister of that Church. Thou hast taken great Pains (as I have before observ'd) to make the World believe that I am (b) a Roman-Catholick, who have disguised my self as a Minister of the Protestant Church of England, for a Benefice. But what Foundation is there for this Black Imputation ? Why, nothing but what I have already shewn to be a most filthy Slander ; viz. That I have restricted the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to One Generation only. For thus thou say'st, (i) It is beyond my Knowledge, that ever any Christian Sect absolutely restricted the cleansing Gift, &c. setting up the Baptism of John in lieu of the Holy Ghost ; except it was the Church of Rome. Ay, George ; and it is beyond my Knowledge, and any one's else, that the Church of Rome does thus much. They do not set up John's Baptism, but Christ's Baptism ; nor do they restrict the cleansing Gift of the Holy Ghost to One Generation. But thy Design is to blacken ; and because thou knewest very well, that a more odious Name than that of a Roman-Catholick could not possibly be given me, thou wer'st therefore resolved that I should have it, tho' at the Expence of a Slander even upon the Papists themselves. Were it material, I could retort the Charge of Popery upon the Quakers, with far more Justice than they have, or can lay it against me ; for there is not a more near Resemblance between the Parent

(g) P. 36.

(b) Ibid.

(i) P. 30.

and the Child, than there is between some of the Darling Opinions of that Sect, and some of the Vildest Corruptions of the Church of Rome. But I shall forbear all Matters of this kind ; thinking it sufficient to have shown, that I have not (as George Gibson says that I have) (k) broke out from the Bounds of all Protestant Churches in general, nor yet of the Church of England in particular. No, Reader ; they are George Gibson, and his Tribe, who have broke out from the Bounds of all Protestant Churches, by rejecting the wholesome Ordinances of Christ, and setting up in the room of them, I know not what Inventions of their own Brains. Tell me, George ; what particular Christian Sect holds the Doctrine of Baptism in the Manner you Quakers hold it ? Show me that Church, from the Beginning of Christianity to this Day, which pleaded, or does plead for the Spirit, exclusive of Water ; or which rejects the Holy Sacrament of Bread and Wine. If thou canst, thou dost something ; If not, (and I am sure thou canst not) then they are you, not we, who are those (l) Wanderers, who are so far strayed from the Flocks of the Reformed, as openly to show your selves in the Midnight of, I will not say Popish, but a far worse than Popish Apostacy. You shelter your selves indeed under the Name of Protestants ; and would fain be thought the most Reformed Part even of the Reformed themselves. And so you may, if throwing off Popery and Christianity together may be call'd Protestantism ; and Enthusiasm, Superstition, and Singularity, deserve the Name of Reformation. But if by being Protestants, be meant (and nothing else can be meant, that is either honourable, or just) the laying aside the Corruptions of the Church of Rome, and holding fast all the Sound and Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith ; I will stand by it, that Jews, Turks, and Infidels, may pretend to be Protestants with as much Reason as you.

(k) P. 36.

(l) P. 29.

§. 38. Wherefore Friend, thou did'st triumph a great deal too soon, and wer't too conceited of thy Performance, when thou did'st cry out in that insulting manner, (*m*) *Where is our small Friend Stebbing now with his Water, and confining the Baptism with the Holy Ghost to the Apostles Days?* I might answer, by asking, *Where is now our Friend Gibson, with his Blood, and with his standing it out against the most plain Texts of Scripture, that there never was a Righteous Man since the Creation, but who was baptized with the Holy Ghost.* But I dare not mention the Blood of our Saviour in so light and ludicrous a manner, as I must be forc'd to do, were I to go about to ridicule that Conceit of *Joseph Middleton's* and thine as it deserves : And tho' thou hast at every turn taken upon thee to scoff and jeer at that Sacred Institution, *Water-Baptism* ; yet know, vain Man, that thou must one Day appear before the dreadful Tribunal of him, whose Ordinances you do thus despise and trample upon. God grant, that you may find Mercy at that Day ; and that those Rents and Divisions which this, and the rest of those False and Unchristian Tenets, by which ye daily deceive and seduce the unwary, have caused in the Body of Christ, may not be laid to your Charge. Some of you, I charitably think, will be of the Number of those, for whom *Jesus will plead with the Father, in that compassionate Intercession which he put up for his Crucifiers ; Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But for the rest, they would do well to consider those terrible Words of our Saviour ; *It must needs be, that offence come ; but woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh : It were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

§. 39. I have said enough, I think, to answer George Gibson's Book. Would I have taken notice of every

(*m*) P. 33.

thing, I might have said a great deal more. But the Reader perhaps will think I have complimented him too far already; and really I should be of the same Opinion my self, were not the Principles of these Men more formidable than his Defence of them. But I cannot forbear repeating it, that the Quakers are a very dangerous Sect. *Their Word doth eat as doth a Canker*, and threatens the Ruin of Christianity, having seized upon its Vital Parts. We cannot therefore be too diligent in opposing them; for such Distempers as these gather Strength by Forbearance, and spread themselves by being despised. The weak Efforts which these Men make when they are attacked, ought not always to secure them from further Notice. For tho' it be no Advantage to the Great and the Brave, to tread down a Contemptible Foe; it may yet prove an Act of Charity to some of the weaker sort, who being either affrighted or beguiled into an Opinion of his Strength, might otherwise be drawn into an Alliance with him, and follow him to their own Destruction. I could wish, that what has been said might prevail with the Quakers at least to be silent; tho' how to expect it I know not. For it has been a constant Method with these Men, instead of *confuting*, to *wear* out their Opposers with their Impertinences, and then to Triumph as if they had come off Conquerors. It is very likely that this may happen to be my Fortune; and to say the Truth, I believe that one such Book more, as I have now been Answering, will go near to do the Business. Should any Man amongst them of Candor and Ingenuity, who is able to manage a Dispute with some Judgment and Discretion, undertake the Controversy, there would be some Encouragement to proceed. But 'tis intolerable to sacrifice a Man's Time and Pains, to a Parcel of Ignorant and Shameless Wretches, who have not Sense enough to understand an Argument, nor the Charity to think that any thing can be so much as well meant that is offer'd against them.

them. Wherefore, I say, if the Quakers have a Mind to decide this Controversy after their usual manner, i. e. by getting *the last Word*, the only way to make a quick Dispatch, will be to employ George Gibson once more, or somebody like him, to Answer this Reply. And by that time, those, I hope, for whose Sake I have done thus much, will be fully convinced what an incorrigible sort of People they are; and consequently, will readily excuse me from taking any farther Notice of them. When Men are once come to such a pass as this, the best and only thing that can be done, will be to Pray for them. This I do, and always shall most heartily; and I think I cannot do it better, than in the Words of our most Excellent Liturgy, with which I take my Leave of them.

O merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hast nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and HERETICKS, and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, World without end. Amen.

F I N I S.

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Pag. 13. Lin. 30. for were read are. P. 14. l. 11. for may r. might.
 Ibid. l. 26. for v. q. r. v. g. P. 16. l. 20. for be r. have been. P. 25.
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